

CASE STUDY: Metrics



Hospital Information

St. Elizabeth Hospital
Enumclaw, Washington
System: Catholic Health Initiatives
Annual ED Volume: 12,000+

TeamHealth Services

Emergency Medicine

Results

67% decrease in door-to-provider time
(from 52 minutes to 17 minutes)

50% decrease in overall length of stay
(from 291 to 145 minutes)

70% decrease in percentage of patients
who left without treatment
(from 5.0 to 1.5%)

\$168,000

increased revenue

Based on the decrease in percentage of patients
who left without treatment multiplied by industry
average revenue per ED patient

Challenge

St. Elizabeth Hospital was challenged with a shortage of both emergency department (ED) and inpatient beds. Due to space constraints, outpatient procedures were being performed in the ED, further reducing its capacity. These constraints, compounded by growing patient volumes, resulted in long wait times and a growing number of patients who left without being seen (LWBS).

Solution

When the hospital realized its declining metrics posed a potential patient safety risk as well as lost revenue, it turned to TeamHealth for help.

The ED leadership kicked off the process by forming a multi-disciplinary performance improvement team and training them in LEAN healthcare strategies. After specifying targeted patient safety goals and metrics, the team designed a patient-centric flow plan that streamlines the patient flow process, eliminating all steps that do not add value to the patient. The resulting design was a "split-flow" model that builds efficiencies through:

- Quickening front-end processes (triage and registration)
- Segregating flow processes for vertical and horizontal patients (sick vs. not sick)
- Hardwiring teamwork (physician and nurse conducting joint assessments and discharge)
- Promoting flow (creating a results waiting area)

Results

The hospital achieved immediate and significant improvements in metrics with the new flow process. The hospital also realized unanticipated benefits, such as improvements in turnaround times for imaging and lab results.

The most important success was improved patient safety. Without reducing thoroughness, the team eliminated waste and improved processes that allowed them to expedite care to patients. As a result of this commitment to patient safety, the hospital was awarded the *William O. Robertson Patient Safety Award* from the Washington State Medical Association.