

CASE STUDY: Clinical Integration



Hospital Information

Upton Regional Medical Center
Thomaston, Georgia
Annual ED visits: 34,000

TeamHealth Services

Emergency Medicine
Hospital Medicine

Results

- Improved patient flow
- Smoother admission and handoff process from the ED to HM program
- Fewer readmissions
- Consistent care and processes with less variability
- Improved patient outcomes
- Increased patient satisfaction scores
- Reduction in cost per case
- Fewer transfers

“Everyone is focused on the care continuum... which helped us alleviate overcrowding and improve patient flow, all while maintaining levels of care.”

- Chief Executive Officer -

Challenge

Upton Regional Medical Center continually applies progressive clinical and operational tactics to ensure the hospital's resources are managed in a cost-effective manner that benefits both the hospital and its patients. Realizing that emergency medicine and hospital medicine programs and metrics are inextricably intertwined, administration began searching for a single provider to manage both programs.

Because of TeamHealth's reputation for clinical quality, customer service, and expertise in coordinating service lines, Upton Regional's administration turned to TeamHealth for management of their emergency medicine (EM) and hospital medicine (HM) programs.

Solution

With the hospital's cooperation, TeamHealth recruited two medical directors—one for Emergency Medicine and one for Hospital Medicine—who had the interpersonal skills and business acumen needed to provide strong leadership for both physician teams and also were committed to working collaboratively with for the common good of the patients. TeamHealth also assigned a vice president of operations who was responsible for helping the EM and HM programs address issues common to both service lines. A shared site coordinator was then appointed to gather data for both service lines, and numerous initiatives and processes were implemented to foster collaboration between the EM and HM programs.

Some of these shared processes included collaborative monthly “goals and progress” meetings with progress continually monitored using TeamHealth's proprietary Integration Dashboard - a combined EM and HM report of individual and shared key metrics and goals. Additionally the medical directors rounded on patients together to ensure accurate and timely communication of patient feedback. The EM and HM LEAN project helped reduce admission decision to departure time. The most notable shared resource was a case manager dedicated to the ED to help reduce readmissions and improve continuity of care.

Results

The open communication between service lines has served to improve patient care and safety as well as to increase the transparency and accountability of all providers. Their professional relationships have also been strengthened through their ability and willingness to learn to listen, understand, and accommodate the challenges faced by their colleague in other departments.