



Championing Team Culture to Improve Hospital Medicine Performance

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OVERVIEW

The experience of this hospital is representative of the swift performance improvements TeamHealth is able to bring to client sites across the country. From leading-edge operational tools to informed decision-making and outstanding clinical performance, TeamHealth is uniquely positioned to help leading hospitals and health systems optimize the performance of their most important clinical service lines, and in this case, a medical facility's hospitalist medicine team.

When a system scorecard highlighted weaknesses within a 500-plus bed Kansas medical center's hospitalist division and the facility's other vital specialty departments, it signaled a need for culture change, better communication and more streamlined collaboration.

A COLLABORATIVE APPROACH TO FINDING THE RIGHT SOLUTION

The hospital turned to TeamHealth to stabilize performance metrics associated with quality patient care.

In response, TeamHealth's clinical and operational leaders reviewed best practices and innovative solutions gleaned from its vast experience in hospital medicine across high-performing health systems across the U.S.

Together, they customized an approach for the hospital's unique situation, implementing a strategy based upon TeamHealth's hospital medicine strategic pillars:

- Identifying strong clinical leaders and engaged clinicians who can align with partner hospitals
- Collaboration within the team in ways that overlap into the facility, developing relationships with key facility stakeholders and learning where to turn for best in-house solutions
- Adjusting expectations to be more open to change, since goals may change or shift, and being open to conform within new or evolving initiatives, (while always keeping clinical quality and patient-centric care the central focus)



RELATIONSHIP-BUILDING RESULTING IN IMPROVED TRUST

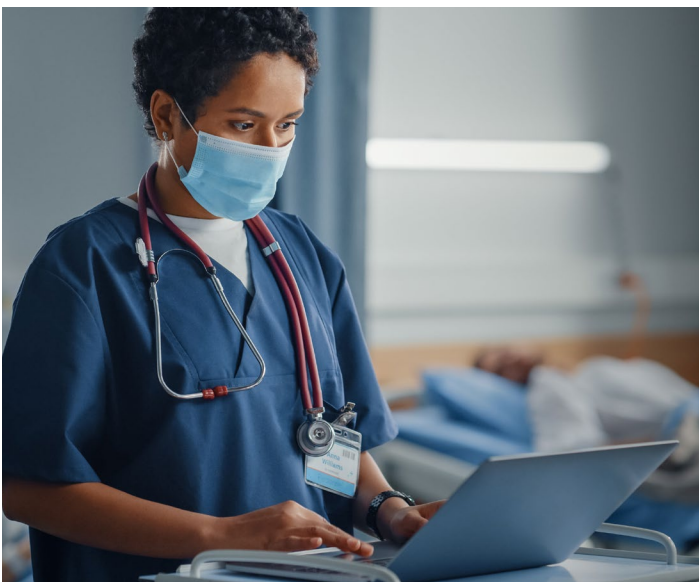
Their first important step involved building stronger relationships within the Midwestern hospital itself, with an emphasis on its vital specialty groups. TeamHealth clinicians also focused on the critical nature of patient handoffs between the ED and the hospital medicine floors, then worked to nurture trust and improve processes associated with those transfers from the ED to the medical floors.

Regular process improvement meetings, held twice monthly, not only kept everyone informed of important scorecard metrics, but also engaged with the improvement process. Visual displays of individual clinician rankings led to an internal competition to see who could keep their numbers highest.

MULTI-PRONGED STRATEGY CHECKS THE BOXES

Key parts of the team's mutually developed strategy included:

- Having the support of the local hospital administrative team, who recognized this was not an overnight fix
- Fostering and improving relationships among the clinicians and the community's preferred care providers (PCPs), then building on that collaboration
- Methodically identifying the processes and expectations associated with the scorecard's measurements
- Tackling the difficulties that kept the group from measuring up to those scorecard standards
- Setting short-term targets in the dashboard to achieve "early wins" before setting larger and ultimate goals



“We had a tall mountain to climb.”

One clinician described the situation at the time the hospital challenged TeamHealth to improve its hospitalist scorecard metrics:

“We had to develop relationships with different key stakeholders in order to know where to go for answers. And we had a long way to go to change the culture.”

“We had some wins along the way, and we set some short-term targets before reaching our ultimate goal. We had to remember ‘don’t bite off more than you can chew.’ There were so many metrics on the dashboard, and we needed to hone in on them, master them and then move on to the next thing and the next thing.”

“Our success says a lot about getting the team to buy in, and sometimes that’s easier said than done. We needed people to understand why we were changing things, like ordering certain medications. We got buy-in gradually and built on the people in the group who were responsive to the efforts, and this created a trickle-down effect.”

“We had good support from the local hospital administration, and they asked their corporate office (who had created the dashboard) to give us time to get it right. We asked for insights to the corporate processes and expectations so that we could properly discuss the process improvement measures.”

“And having TeamHealth’s resources truly was proven valuable,” he said, adding that TeamHealth’s large network of clinicians, improvement specialists and administrative assistance “allows us to network very easily and access the tools to deliver higher quality medical care. The leadership training development through TeamHealth also provides as an excellent resource to facilitate direction when starting a pilot project or leading a committee.”

CELEBRATING THE WINS ALONG THE WAY

As the initiative reached full steam, the entire group began to hold each other accountable, and when significant milestones were achieved, they celebrated the wins as a team. During those celebrations, appropriate attention and accolades were given to individual members who contributed to the team concept (and who then wanted to help “carry the ball”).

As the successes mounted, additional hospital clinicians became champions for TeamHealth’s efforts, prompting a ripple effect across the hospital. The hospital’s chief medical officer called for a celebration, lauding TeamHealth for its laser-focused work within the facility. At the event, he awarded the TeamHealth hospitalist group with a Top Performer Award for 2020, based on their “quality metrics and outstanding care.”



RESULTS

Key performance metrics reflected solid improvement:

- Geometric Mean Length of Stay (GMLOS) decreased to **10% under goal**
- Follow-up appointments scheduled prior to discharge increased from 25% to **72.8%**
- Compliance with the 3-hour sepsis bundle increased to an average of **79%** for 2021, (which is **34%** above goal)

CONCLUSIONS

TeamHealth’s series of initiatives unified the facility’s key clinicians regardless of their specialties. The work was recognized by all, including the hospital administration, as a dynamic force within the hospital’s framework of vital departments.

The end result? TeamHealth’s unwavering efforts created a needed culture change and resulted in building, and sustaining, a high-performing hospital medicine team...a team that was duly appreciated, noted and celebrated by the facility’s local administration.

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