TEAMHealth®

📁 **case study**

Transforming Patient Experience: From the 20th to 80th Percentile in a California Emergency Department

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High-quality healthcare should go beyond clinical diagnosis and treatment to ensure effective patient communication and experiences. This not only improves patient satisfaction but can also improve outcomes, clinician experience and hospital productivity. TeamHealth's proprietary APEX program puts focus on improving patient experience by empowering clinicians through education, data and support.

THE CHALLENGE

A California facility was struggling to achieve desired patient experience scores. Moreover, the emergency department (ED) needed improved throughput and operational performance. Ranking in the 20th percentile for patient experience and receiving low clinician satisfaction scores, the hospital's leadership sought change.

Hospital Information
A 334-bed facility in California, and part of the Dignity Health system

TeamHealth Services
- Emergency Medicine

THE SOLUTION

In November 2021, facility leadership began a partnership with TeamHealth for emergency medicine services, citing our patient experience program as a major factor in this decision. Once the partnership began, leadership asked for a thorough review of their patient experience strategies. With an eye toward sustained improvement, our Performance and Innovation Consultants (PIC) team, including Dr. Wilfredo Rivera and Dennis Jepsen, went on-site to evaluate areas for improvement. The team worked closely with the facility medical director at the time and the c-suite throughout this process.

Once they identified areas for improvement, the team implemented support tactics immediately. Once initial support was in place, patient experience scores began to rise even before the concerted effort began. In March 2022, the new facility medical director, Dr. Gabrielle Morrow, began APEX in earnest, with on-site education, resources and touchpoints for physicians and nursing staff. Over the next three months, patient experience scores skyrocketed from the 20th percentile to the 80th percentile. The following tactics helped transform patient and clinician experience at the facility.

EDUCATION

Over two days, the PIC team hosted seven educational events for all disciplines affecting the ED, such as physicians, nursing, lab techs and more. These educational modules include standardized learnings we consolidated from thousands of partnerships across the country, with a focus on those who maintain the 90th percentile and above ranking in patient experience.

RESOURCES

To effect change, the team also needed resources. Much of the tangible resources provided were directly from staff feedback received at the start of the patient experience improvement efforts. This not only gives staff the tools they need to be effective but also empowers clinicians, who benefit from having their feedback heard and acted upon. Some of these resources were not clinical but directly impacted patient experience, such as the request for blanket warmers.

DAILY HUDDLES AND MEDICAL MINUTES

Regular touchpoints are vital for improvement in any area. Dr. Morrow holds daily huddles for the ED team to ensure alignment. During these huddles, the team focuses on what's happening that day, but also it's a broader check-in with the clinicians. For a few moments, they connect their clinical work to wellness. How does improving patient experience help clinicians, particularly as we're all still facing the burnout and stress of the pandemic?

Medical minutes have also been a powerful tool. During this one-minute connection, Dr. Morrow provides a brief education from the APEX program and HUM 20 tactics, pioneered by TeamHealth patient experience expert Dr. Lawrence Hum. This quick connection provides an added touchpoint while also providing regular, digestible education beyond the formalized APEX educational modules.

PARTNERSHIP

Finally, to improve patient experience, we needed a strong partnership. When the ED team began this journey, TeamHealth leadership and the PIC team worked very closely with facility leadership. This close collaboration was vital when it came to resource acquisition and buy-in from teams participating in the educational modules. TeamHealth's stability with the facility's support has transformed the patient experience at the hospital.

RESULTS

Throughout the summer of 2022, the facility experienced a major nursing turnover and leadership changes that could have derailed the patient experience improvement efforts. However, even with these challenges – coupled with increased volume – patient experience stayed steady. The team has seen several transformations:

- **Improved patient experience scores from the 20th percentile to the 80th percentile in three months**
- **Increased volume, with clinicians seeing 2+ patients per hour (contrasted with the previous 1.4-1.7 patients per hour) while maintaining safety and experience**
- **Improved clinician satisfaction and productivity through increased volume and effort**

CONCLUSIONS

Patient experience is a vital area of focus – and it's a collaborative effort. From arrival to discharge, patients need adequate support, communication and compassion. The effects of positive experiences go beyond patient satisfaction and scores; strong patient experience programs improve outcomes and enhance performance. If you're ready to learn how we can help transform patient experience in your facility, reach out to our team.