

“Improving Patient Safety, Quality and Nurse Satisfaction”

by Redesigning the Patient Transfer Process at NBIMC, New Jersey

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Context: Newark Beth Israel Medical Center (NBIMC) is a 673-bed hospital based in Newark, New Jersey with over 60% of patients being admitted from the Emergency Department (ED) and over 80,000 ED visits a year.

Challenge: Patient transfers from one caregiver to another are an area of high safety consequences. Every time a patient is moved there is a risk that essential information regarding care will not be communicated. Nurses report that the information they provide and receive during patient transfer is highly variable and impacts patient safety as well as their own job satisfaction.

What We Did: The Vice President of Patient Care Services, Nancy Shendell-Falik, and the external resources (Mike Feinson and Bernard Mohr from Innovation Partners International/IPI) agreed that the highest payoff would come from an approach that improved both patient safety, quality of care and nurse satisfaction – and that success would come from focusing on improving the core work of the organization rather than more tangential things like “culture”.

The client selected a relationship centered, participatory action research approach, called Appreciative Inquiry (AI) to analyze, redesign and implement changes in the patient transfer process.

The project followed a simple but powerful change framework: – Definition-Discovery-Dream-Design–Delivery, known as the 5-D Cycle. This cycle encompassed a series of dialogues, interviews, innovation mapping, goal-setting and self organizing implementation initiatives.

Outcomes

Short term *Outcomes (as reported by the client)* of this effort included:

- A “map” that serves as an overall guide to the “Ultimate Handoff Process”
- A new welcome script, safety assessment, standardized transfer report, and low risk cardiac transport protocol
- A list of stakeholders that would be impacted by the proposed changes and a communication strategy for engaging those stakeholders in improving and executing the changes
- A list of measures for monitoring the impact of the redesigned process.

Medium term *outcomes (as reported by the client) were achieved within 6 months or less:*

- Up to **9.3% improvement in nurse satisfaction** and teamwork;
- Stronger interpersonal relationships among front line nursing staff and interest in further improvements;
- An overall increase of **10.2% in patient satisfaction**;
- Increased rates of patient assessment (with an **11% increase in completion of nutritional assessments and a 70% increase in completion of skin assessments**);
- Significant improvements in compliance with cardiac enzyme regime and medication administration records that increased by **9.2% and 81.8%** respectively;
- A **60 % increase** in the number of patients able to be transported without a cardiac monitor – with resulting **cost savings of 67.5 hours of nursing time per month**;
- Other telemetry and medical surgical units have begun to adopt these improvements.