

St. Luke's Hospital Success Story

Two projects:

1. Saving 37 Miles – Reviewing Physical Arrangement of OB Triage

A Lean activity was held in the Center for Women's and Children's Health that focused on the admission and triage area for expectant mothers. As we reviewed the area, we saw several opportunities for efficiency, the most notable being the physical arrangement of the rooms and equipment required to triage a patient. By tracking the steps of the triage nurses, we discovered that moving a few things around and changing the usage of a couple rooms would help considerably.

To analyze this, we created a team of nurses, techs, and supervisors to study the situation. We discovered that some functions that were not critical to the triage operation could be moved to other areas of the building to create space for the testing room, which was 20 steps away, and was visited 3 times for every triage patient. We could also create efficiency by updating the filing system, adding a computer in the area for charting, and rearranging the utility rooms.

The results of this activity were a pleasant surprise. We measured the steps that nurses took to complete the task before and after the changes, and noted that the travel distance to serve one patient was reduced by an average of **380 feet**. If you multiply that number by the average number of patients the CWCH serves every month – which is about 525 – we found that by using this new process, nurses would walk **37 fewer miles per month**. Other efficiencies were gained by updates of the filing system and the utility usage. This project exemplified a great job by the CWCH Lean team, and how Lean can help make life better for the associates. These positive results will help us serve our patients better.

2. Supplies in the ED

As we reviewed the Emergency Department for Lean opportunities, and as we talked to the nurses and techs, one theme kept coming up: supplies. We didn't know where things were, how much we had, how many places things were stored, where things were kept in each exam room – essentially, we needed to create a better way to manage supplies.

We created a team of nurses and techs (and a materials person), and we attacked the problem. We set aside a day to go through all the supplies in the area – we went through every closet, every storage area, every place where supplies were stored. We determined where

things would be stored, how much we would keep, and what we had that was excess and could be either disposed of or returned to central supply. We returned over \$3,000 worth of supplies. We then informed the entire department of our efforts.

Next, we looked at the materials that are kept in the exam rooms. Though there are several different room configurations in the area, we determined where supplies would be stored in each room. For example, the left hand drawer in each room would always contain the same thing. This part was done over a two-week period as the rooms were available and the techs had time. The results of both of these activities is a more organized Emergency Department, a more satisfied staff who feel more in control of their area, and a cost savings to the hospital.