

## Harris Methodist saves \$648,695 through SIPOC process changes

Harris Methodist, a 229 bed facility located in Fort Worth, Texas, is a full service hospital with over 630 employed physicians. Although the hospital has been successfully treating patients for over 20 years, it was experiencing a major problem in its emergency department—slow patient throughput was causing numerous complaints, heavy dissatisfaction and many patients to leave without receiving medical attention. Harris Methodist therefore assumed the role of patient and called Caldwell Butler & Associates for help.

### Harris Hospital's Needs

- Decreased Patient LOS
- Decreased LBS Rate
- Improve Triage Protocol
- Increase Patient Satisfaction

## CBA Examines ED Operating Process

Caldwell Butler & Associates analyzed each element of the SIPOC process (supplier, input, process, output, and customer) at Harris Methodist to determine causes of wasted time. Observations showed that the total triage cycle time from patient arrival to bed placement was an excessive 42 minutes and the ED-IP cycle time from admit order to IP arrival was also exceedingly long: 89 minutes. Many patients would leave the emergency department without receiving any treatment (LWBS), causing Harris Methodist considerable profit loss. Those patients who did receive medical attention and were admitted to the hospital were staying too long (LOS), causing unnecessary occupying of beds. The scheduled staff hours and their location assignments for the hospital fast track were inefficient, again causing waste. Nurses and physicians were working with paper forms during examinations and the closest printer was still too far away for convenience and speed. Samples sent to the lab for testing could not be tracked by physicians and results were only released by the lab in batches. Those on the medical staff as well as patients were losing time and focus by having to travel a lengthy distance to and from the waiting room, which was located inconveniently. As a result of these and other problems, patient satisfaction was suffering and the Harris Methodist emergency department was at a loss.

## For each problem: A solution.

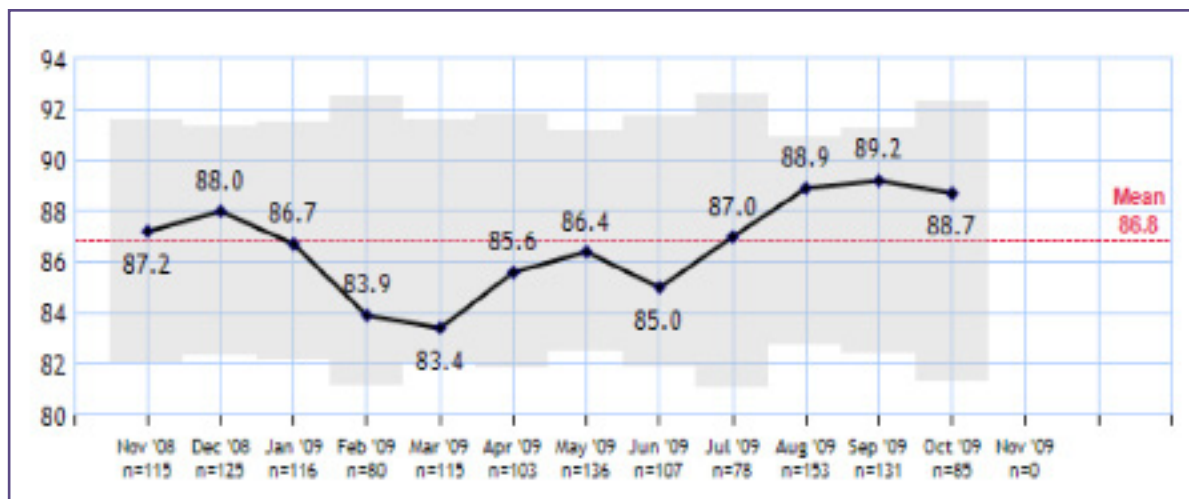
In response, Caldwell Butler & Associates took action and established specific goals to increase the efficiency of the hospital's processes. CBA then divided the medical staff into teams and designed strategies (through its 100 Day Workout) to achieve those goals.

One of the goals involved implementing a quicker, more focused triage protocol that highlighted the chief complaint of the patient, recent medicines, pertinent history and quick measurements such as height and weight. For Harris Methodist, it was found that efficiency would be increased if the triage was performed inside the examination room as opposed to a separate triage area. To decrease the ED-IP cycle time, the ED implemented a 30 minute admit order to transfer a patient while the IP implemented a 30 minute bed ready response to receive that patient. CBA also implemented technology to more quickly notify the status of a bed (dirty/clean) to the medical staff. When transferring patients, protocol was modified to allow one follow-up phone call in order to improve patient exchange report. These, along with other strategies, were used to decrease the triage cycle time and the ED-IP cycle time.

In response to the other conflicts, the fast track staffing was adjusted and the waiting room's location was changed to decrease wasted time. Electronic signatures for consent were introduced and the printer was relocated closer to the ED department for documents whose paper-form are necessary. An Online Monitor was established exclusively for patients of the ED to allow physicians to track the lab work flow from order, receiving, testing and completion. Similar to a television screen, this device, together with the lab's agreement to release results immediately, removed the barrier causing doctors' delay in treatment. Together, these strategies led to considerable changes.

## Tangible Solutions Bring Tangible Results

- The total Triage cycle time, from patient arrival to bed placement, was reduced by 23 minutes.
- The total ED-IP cycle time, from patient admit order to IP arrival, was reduced by 33 minutes.
- The average LOS decreased from 97 to 61 minutes
- The average patient satisfaction increased from 87.9 to 89%



- The LWBS Rate decreased
- Because the LWBS rate decreased, there was a LWBS Recovered Contribution Margin of \$339,718
- The Salary Dollars Reduction due to Fast Track was \$88,608
- The Online Monitor caused a savings of \$23,269
- The amount saved by releasing test results immediately rather than in batch-form was \$197,100

**In total, Harris Methodist saved \$648,695.**



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## Caldwell Butler & Associates, LLC

Caldwell Butler & Associates is an innovative firm specializing in strategic deployment of Lean-Six Sigma resulting in cost position improvement, financial turnarounds, and patient throughput optimization. Caldwell Butler & Associates has assisted hundreds of clients increase productivity, maximize patient throughput, and improve patient satisfaction. Our team is exclusively dedicated to healthcare and brings extensive practical experience in hospital operations to each project. Our knowledge of the healthcare environment allows us to implement effective performance improvement programs tailored to the specific needs of your organization. Caldwell Butler & Associates is the trainer of choice for both the American College of Healthcare Executives and the American Society of Quality. During the past decade, Caldwell Butler has personally trained thousands of senior hospital executives in the effective healthcare application of Lean-Six Sigma. Chip is a nationally recognized author of four leading books and served as the healthcare representative on the U.S. Quality Council.

Unlike traditional consulting firms, Caldwell Butler & Associates believes on-site mentoring and apprenticeship are the most effective methods for achieving sustainable gains in performance. Our on-site programs empower your employees by providing them with the tools to attain new levels of performance. We offer proven techniques and methods for enhancing personal accountability, monitoring progress of initiatives and tracking your ROI on each project. Where most consulting firms are satisfied with finding "identified savings," Caldwell Butler & Associates works along side your team throughout implementation thus providing you with a sustainable process for managing the entire productivity improvement cycle.

### **Caldwell Butler & Associates apprenticeship and mentoring programs include:**

- Effective use of aggressive benchmarking data
- Proven techniques for non-negotiable goal-setting
- Methods of identifying waste and generating cost savings strategies
- Creation of implementable 100-Day Action Plans
- Flawless execution of performance improvement projects
- Creation of internal tracking methods for enhancing personal accountability