IBM Watson Health™

SwedishAmerican MEDICAL GROUP

SwedishAmerican Hospital

Hospital uses IBM ActionOI operational performance improvement program to evaluate its operations to identify inefficiencies and prioritize areas of opportunity

SwedishAmerican Hospital, located in Rockford, Illinois is a 333-bed, nonprofit, acute care hospital founded in 1911. It serves 12 counties in northern Illinois and Southern Wisconsin, is home to the University of Illinois College of Medicine residency program and is a division of UW Health.

Overview

The need
SwedishAmerican Hospital was looking for a way to assess the current state of its operations relative to its peers to identify areas of improvement

The solution
The hospital combined the benchmarking insights of IBM® ActionOI® with the engagement and teamwork of hospital staff to improve its WHUOS ranking percentile

The benefit
– Decreased critical care worked hours per unit of service from83rd to 31st percentile
– $200K in annual labor savings
– Improved employee satisfaction from 54th to 85th percentile
– Reduced mortality ratio in critical care from 1.40 to 0.79 on APACHE scoring

Leaders at SwedishAmerican Hospital asked the critical care unit (CCU) to evaluate its operations to identify inefficiencies and prioritize areas of opportunity—with a particular focus on the often emotionally charged topic of staffing. But they were also adamant that changes must not impact the hospital's high expectations for quality.

The unit turned to the ActionOI® operational performance improvement solution from IBM® Watson Health™ to see where the department stood compared to national peer benchmarking. It quickly became clear that SwedishAmerican was in the 83rd percentile in nursing worked hours per unit of service (WHUOS), and significant improvements were needed.

Straight to the source

Unit leadership knew that for this kind of initiative to be successful, it would need to be directly driven by care staff. Unit charge nurses, direct care staff, patient care technicians and unit clerks were all challenged to brainstorm ideas and devise a care delivery model that would result in a reduction of WHUOS—without compromising patient safety or staff satisfaction and engagement. Recommended changes had to be supported by the hospital's nursing leadership, too.

Enterprise-wide collaboration

To develop the most effective strategy possible, the CCU leadership team and direct care staff worked collaboratively with several departments across the organization, including human resources, the nursing supervision team and the step-down unit leadership. They also consulted with the finance and budget departments to determine best practices for staffing and to clarify calculation methods.

Ultimately, the decision was made to reduce WHUOS by changing the skill mix of registered nurses (RNs) to patient care technicians (PCTs) in the CCU.

Better utilization of resources

Support services, in the form of unit clerks, were assigned to assist in the transition and cross-training of PCTs. As a result, all PCTs were equipped with the skills to perform the duties of the unit clerk in critical care.

In addition, unit clerks were given the option of cross-training to a unit technician role. This allowed the clerks to be more supportive of the nursing staff, which allowed for more RN hours at the bedside, resulting in an overall decrease in WHUOS. The finance department was integral in training unit leadership in real-time assessment of WHUOS, enabling closer tracking of productivity performance.

Impressive results

Thanks to the benchmarking insights of ActionOI, and the engagement and teamwork of hospital staff, the ranking of WHUOS at SwedishAmerican went from the 83rd percentile to a sustained ranking of 31st percentile.

In addition, the organization is saving approximately $200,000 annually, sustained over four years. Employee satisfaction rose from the 54th percentile to the 85th percentile, and the mortality ratio in critical care declined 43 percent.

Thanks to the benchmarking insights of ActionOI, and the engagement and teamwork of hospital staff, the ranking of nursing hours worked per unit of service (WHUOS) at SwedishAmerican went from the 83rd percentile to a sustained ranking of 31st percentile.

All client examples cited or described are presented as illustrations of the manner in which some clients have used IBM products and the results they may have achieved. Actual environmental costs and performance characteristics will vary depending on individual client configurations and conditions.

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