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MISSOURI TEAM QUALITY AWARD RECIPIENT

MEDICATION SAFETY TEAM at Heartland Health , St. Joseph



PROFILE

Heartland Health is a sole community provider hospital for a 21-county region comprising northwest Missouri, northeast Kansas and southeast Nebraska. With more than 2,700 employees, its vision is to be the best and safest place in America to receive healthcare and live a healthy and productive life. Heartland’s mission is to improve the health of individuals and communities in the Heartland Health region and provide the right care, at the right time, in the right place, at the right cost with outcomes second to none.

OPPORTUNITY FOR IMPROVEMENT

To achieve the goal to provide the “best and safest care,” Heartland began to focus on medication processes. The introduction of best practice models began to point out opportunities in medication process data collection. Based on this information, immediate changes were made in the mechanism used to report and collect data around medication utilization and adverse events. A cultural shift was made to a non-punitive reporting system. This change gave staff the comfort level necessary to provide additional insight into real and potential gaps in the medication process. Best practice integration continued, while new and informative data was collected. This data became a custom database and was stratified to identify processes in need of improvement.

TEAM ACTIONS

The Medication Process was subdivided into four distinct sub processes: ordering of the medication, transcription of the order into various computer systems, preparation and dispensing of the medication by the pharmacy and administration of the medication to the patient. Utilizing a prioritization method, the top opportunities were targeted in ordering, transcription, and administration. A sub team was built around each sub process and began the application of PASTEplus, Heartland’s innovative performance improvement model that merges a five-step process (Problem, Analysis, Solution, Transition, and Evaluation) with the analytical tools of Six Sigma.

Each sub team performed extensive flowcharting, data collection, analysis, and solution development. Solutions were prioritized and implemented utilizing formal action plans. In the end, the results are carefully measured and reported from the staff level to the Quality Management Board.

RESULTS

- Ordering events were reduced by 78%
- Transcription events were reduced by 64%
- Dispensing events were reduced by 17%
- Administration events were reduced by 34%
- Total expense reduction of nearly \$1.9 million

The end result is improved patient outcomes and decreased healthcare expense. This demonstrates another leap toward the vision of “best and safest”.

FUTURE PLANS

In addition, Heartland plans to implement additional solutions that were identified in the team’s work. One of the ultimate goals of the program is to prepare for the advent of Computerized Physician Order Entry (CPOE) within the next several years.

For Further Information Contact:

David Loyd at (816) 271-6832, or by email at david.loyd@mail.heartland-health.com

