

Nurses Work to Improve Staffing

For Susan Michaels, R.N. (name changed), working the 7 a.m. to 7 p.m. shift is the hardest. While the morning is busy with getting breakfast and morning meds to her patients, she is able handle the routine. However, during the middle of her shift, patients are discharged and admitted at such a quick pace, she feels overwhelmed with her workload. Many nurses, like Susan, enter the profession to provide quality care to those who need it, but in a pressure situation like this – they find themselves stressed, hassled and short on time. At the end of the day, they may leave work feeling as if they didn't do a good job.

In an effort to support our nurses and patients, the System has begun an innovative approach to improve patient care called In Quality staffing.

Through this process, inpatient nursing managers work with their teams to create staffing schedules that match patient demand. "Traditional staffing places nursing staff on 8-hour shifts starting at 7 a.m., 3 p.m. and 11 p.m., or 12-hour shifts going from 7 a.m. to 7 p.m. These shifts don't always meet the workload demands of all nursing units," says **Sarah Sinclair**, System chief patient care officer. "In Quality staffing matches staffing to patient need." In other words, during peak patient hours, more staff is scheduled. During less busy times, fewer employees work. This means that a nurse who worked 7 a.m. to 7 p.m. may now work from 11 a.m. to 11 p.m.

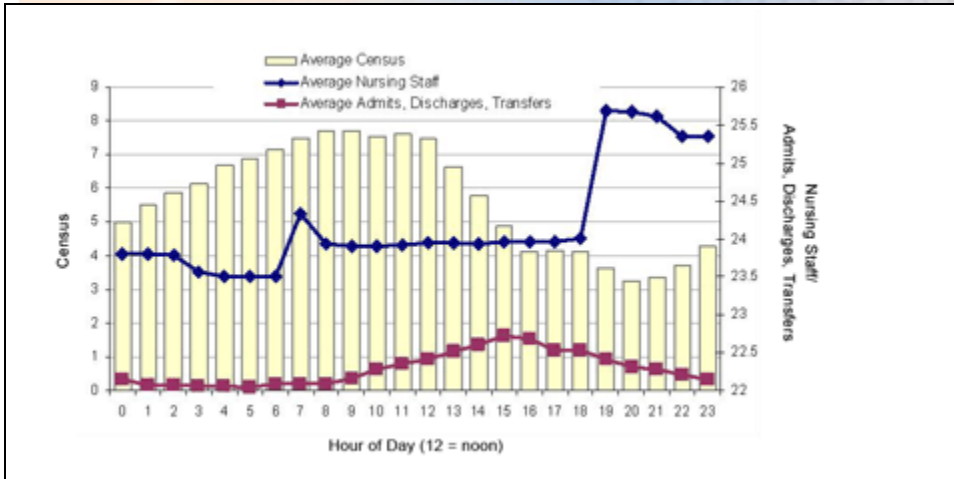
To implement this initiative, Memorial Hermann leveraged its Lean Six Sigma framework. This tool is used by thousands of leading companies to identify ways to improve quality through enhanced business processes. "Lean Six Sigma is a data-driven performance improvement methodology focused on reducing variation and eliminating non-value added steps," says **Helen Powers**, System executive of Organization Effectiveness/Lean Six Sigma. "In Quality staffing is an inclusive process in which staff determine the best solutions using Lean Six Sigma and data to better create shift schedules that ultimately increase patient and nurse satisfaction."



A group of nursing staff, Six Sigma black belts and other leadership met at Northwest last week to report on the progress made since implementing the In Quality staffing process in September.

FOR FRONT

News for Memorial Hermann Employees



With traditional staffing of nurses, the number of staff does not always align with patient demand.

The Organization Effectiveness/Lean Six Sigma team took on the enormous task of compiling, sorting and analyzing data from 10 hospitals, for more than 5,800 nurses in more than 180 nursing units to determine busier patient times and note patterns and trends. Using this data, nursing managers were empowered to work with their staff to create schedules that match patient need.

This model has been implemented with great success at several of the nation’s leading healthcare systems. It began in response to the growing trend of fewer nurses for a growing patient population. “The nursing shortage is projected to worsen in the next several years,” says Sarah. “We must be more creative if we are to meet the needs of the patient and attract the brightest and best nurses. In Quality staffing can do that.” **Laura Rodriguez, R.N.**, director of the ICU and Telemetry Services for Southeast, helped introduce the In Quality staffing process to her team in September. “They were excited about the opportunity for flexible shifts,” she says. “Many of my staff volunteered to be the first to try them.”

Laura says that In Quality staffing has created smoother workdays. Instead of employees leaving work feeling overwhelmed, a nurse’s workload remains more consistent and staff members go home feeling satisfied that they are staffed appropriately to provide exceptional patient care.

As part of this new process, Laura and other nursing managers receive data on the number of staff and patients at their hospitals, hour per hour. “This data has definitely made my job easier,” she says. “Having this information allows us to become better business managers, as well as clinical managers. Also, the data lets our employees engage in productivity decisions. As a result of having this information and sharing it with staff, many front line employees have offered ideas to improve productivity.”

FOR EFRONT

News for Memorial Hermann Employees



Deanna Foster, Six Sigma black belt, attended the meeting at Northwest last week to discuss the new staffing process. She was one of several black belts to attend.

All Memorial Hermann inpatient nursing units have received In Quality training. Some have implemented different shifts. Thirty days after putting new shifts in place, staff members convene to report on what they implemented, what worked, challenges faced and potential next steps.

Recently at Northwest, an excited group of nursing staff met to report on the progress made since implementing this new process in September. "I've heard nothing but good news since starting this project," said **Susan Jadowski**, Northwest chief patient care officer. "Many of our staff members have submitted ideas to improve efficiency or reduce waste – employees have submitted 42 ideas in 30 days. Many of these are already in action."

Nursing directors at the meeting poke about the program afterward. "This process lets nurses know that we care," said **Diane Patke**, clinical manager. "Many of our staff members like the new shifts – they're arriving earlier and leaving earlier. Before, all PCAs, clerks and nurses arrived to work at the same time. This way is less chaotic."

Sarah Sinclair says that this process engages nursing staff and managers to be part of the solution for quality care. "Each member of our nursing leadership can help us define the best staffing schedule to help us in our journey to be the best patient care provider in Houston," she says.

This process allows Memorial Hermann to deliver our Brand Promise of providing the best possible clinical outcomes with exceptional patient care experiences. According to Sarah, "If we can provide the right caregiver, with the right skills, at the right time, for the right patient, we can meet our goals for quality, patient satisfaction, nursing satisfaction and physician satisfaction."



Shelita Anderson, patient care director, and **Diane Patke**, clinical manager, talked about the progress they've seen since beginning In Quality staffing.

News & Events

Katy Introduces Pet Therapy to Its Patients

On Wednesday, Oct. 17, patients and staff at the Katy Campus met the hospital's newest volunteer – an 18-month-old Australian Shepherd named Gracie. The dog and her owner, Sharon Evans – a retired homicide detective with the Houston Police Department – are the first certified therapy dog team to join the hospital's newly established pet visitation program.

"We anticipate that our patients and staff will experience tremendous benefits as a result of this program," says **Scott Barbe**, Katy CEO. "In fact, research indicates that interaction with an animal can lower a patient's blood pressure, reduce stress, increase optimism, improve morale



and speed the healing process.”“The opening of our Level III NICU assures that infants can receive high-quality care in a close-to-home environment that’s designed to alleviate some of the stresses faced by families of newborns with special needs. We’ve made every effort to create conditions that are pleasant for babies and parents,” says Trudi Stafford, chief patient care officer for Southeast. “If a baby needs an even higher level of specialized services, Life Flight has a neonatal transport team to transfer the infant to Children’s Memorial Hermann Hospital. Life Flight also can transfer stable babies back to us from the medical center for further NICU care so they are closer to home.”

Dogs like Gracie must be evaluated by a veterinarian to make sure they are healthy, up-to-date on vaccinations and well tempered before they can participate in Katy’s pet visitation program. Additionally, canine participants must be certified by a pet therapy certification program.

Gracie earned her certification at Rover Oaks Pet Resort–Katy. According to Shannon Smith, owner of the organization, in order for Gracie to become a certified therapy dog, she not only had to master basic commands like “sit,” “stay” and “heel,” but she also had to learn how to comfortably and confidently maneuver around standard hospital equipment, such as wheelchairs and walkers.

Gracie and her owner will make weekly rounds at Memorial Hermann Katy Wednesdays at 2 p.m.

For more information on Katy’s pet visitation program and how to become involved, contact Brenda Kepner, manager of volunteers and community service, at 281.644.7582 or Brenda.Kepner@memorialhermann.org.

Coding School Program Helps Employees Advance Their Skills

For employees looking to advance their skills within the System, a new coding training program begins in January of 2008 that will train students to become Health Information Management (HIM) coding specialists within Memorial Hermann. Employee students will be paid to train for six months. At the end of the program, students will be eligible to take a position as a coding specialist within the System.

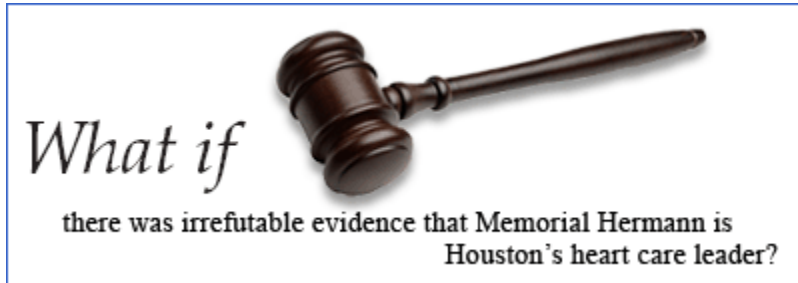
“This is a great opportunity for someone to advance within our System,” says Anna Wheeler, director of coding. “Medical records coders fill an important role. They translate diagnoses and procedures found in medical records into numeric or alphanumeric codes for the reimbursement and research needs of the hospital.”

As a HIM professional, the coder works to enhance the quality and uses of data within the healthcare industry. Coded data is used by hospitals for quality management activities, case-mix management, planning, marketing and other administrative and research activities.

To apply to become a part of healthcare information coding at Memorial Hermann, complete and print the application and mail it by Nov. 23 to:

Memorial Hermann
Coding Training Program
9301 Southwest Freeway, Suite 470
Houston , TX 77074

Data Proves Good Outcomes for Heart Patients



Our November What if ad campaign supports and highlights our Heart and Vascular program, and its many successes.

Memorial Hermann has received numerous awards for excellence in heart care in the last year. VHA, a national healthcare alliance, recognized the system 10 awards for clinical excellence. Thomson, the world's leading healthcare information resource, chose Memorial Hermann for its list of the nation's top 100 cardiovascular hospitals – the only Houston hospital named to that list.

Data on our Web site shows how the success rate of Memorial Hermann for treating heart failure and heart attacks compared to national benchmarks.

Millions of men and women are at risk for vascular disease and stroke, and early detection can prevent serious and even fatal outcomes. Register today for a screening at a Memorial Hermann campus in your community. Screening costs are \$119 for abdominal aortic aneurysm, peripheral vascular disease and carotid artery combined – or \$45 per individual test. To schedule your appointment, call 800.690.0289. Screenings will occur at these campuses on these dates:

Katy: Nov. 21 and 29

Memorial City : Nov. 15 and 16; Dec. 6 and 7

Southeast: Dec. 18

Sugar Land : Dec. 21

Memorial Hermann-TMC: Nov. 28

The Woodlands: Dec. 3

Act Now: Join the Memorial Hermann Marathon Running Team



If you have registered to run in the 2008 Chevron Houston Marathon, sign up to run as part of the Memorial Hermann Running Team.

This is the first year Memorial Hermann will have an official team, and it's open to runners in each of the three race categories – marathon, half marathon and 5K. The group will consist of employees, physicians, family and friends, and it could be one of the largest corporate teams in the race.

To register for the team, call 713.222.CARE no later than Friday, Nov. 9. The registration fee is \$25, and includes:

- Team jersey
- Visor
- Shoe wallet

The team registration fee does not include entry into the race.

For more information about the Memorial Hermann team, contact Jennifer MacDonough.

Total Rewards

Check Out 1st Quarter Bonus Plan Results

The results for the first quarter FY08 Employee and Manager Bonus Plan are now available. Employees can view their results via PiE (Partners in Excellence), and if you do not have access to PiE, results are available through your manager or director.

The purpose of this bonus plan is to unite all employees to help Memorial Hermann become the "Best of the Best" in the healthcare industry by focusing on and working toward obtaining the



System's strategic goals. You will have an opportunity to earn an additional \$250 at the end of this fiscal year by achieving these goals.

Bonus payout for each facility/System Services employee will be based on these three performance goals:

- Improving Patient/Customer Experience
- Decreasing Controllable Expenses
- Improving Quality Issues

For managers, the following goals also apply:

- Improving Patient Safety
- Improving Employee Satisfaction

All employees and managers are eligible to participate in this bonus program. For more details, contact your manager or director.

Helping You Achieve Your Wellness Goals

Memorial Hermann has made a commitment to offer you resources to assist you and your family in living a healthy lifestyle. Studies show that lifestyle is responsible for more than one half of your total well being. It's important that you and your family take a primary role in maintaining your health.

To help you improve or maintain your health, Memorial Hermann offers you:

- Wellness benefits where in most cases you pay nothing out of your pocket under your health plan.
- A weight loss program that pays you to lose weight.
- A disease management program that gives you 24-hour access to a registered nurse who can assist you and your family with information about your illness or health condition.
- Fitness programs with waived initial enrollment fees, and/or payroll deductions.
- An employee Assistance Program offering employees and families a place to turn for confidential counseling.

Wellness fairs every quarter offering a variety of speakers/demonstrations.

To find out more about these programs, contact your Human Resources administrator.

Health and Wellness

Garden Spa and Wellness Center Offerings



Massage and Therapy School

It's intern massage time again, and you can receive an hour-long intern massage for \$30. For more information or to make an appointment, call 713.448.8116.

Garden Spa Specials

Start the holiday season off right with a relaxing service in the Garden Spa. During November, get 25 percent off any retail item with the purchase of any service.

Pilates

Receive a 10 percent discount on personal training Pilates packages. For more information or to purchase a package, call 713.448.WELL

Counseling Center Offerings

The Memorial Hermann Counseling Center offers free lectures on Friday nights that can grant continuing education units (CEUs):

November: Improving Parenting Skills with Elementary and Preschool Children, Nov. 2, 6:30 to 8 p.m. 1.5 hours of CEU credit

December: Healthy Relationships – What Do They Look Like? Dec. 7, 6:30 to 8 p.m. 1.5 hours of CEU credit

For more information, contact Martha Osorio or Lesley Hood.

People & Culture

Katy Halloween Party Raises Money for Partners in Caring

Katy held a Halloween party for employees and their families on Thursday evening, Oct. 25, to help raise funds for the Partners in Caring Employee Fund. Attendees enjoyed pizza a bean bag toss, a coloring station and more. The hospital collected \$450 toward the fund.

Did You Know?

About the Catholic culture ... Did you know Catholic novena prayers are a traditional and popular Catholic prayer method? A novena is a series of prayers given for nine days straight for a special intention. Catholics believe that God sees a novena as a sign of devotion, especially when the person saying the novena asks for a specific intention.

For more details, refer to the Diversity Quick Guide: Spiritual and Cultural Traditions on MHWeb and ClinicalWeb. This is the 32nd "Did You Know?" fact in a series presented by Spiritual Care and Development.



HIPAA

Common HIPAA Misconceptions

from The Permanente Journal

Q. Patient charts are stored in a room not directly supervised by staff, but accessible to the public. The light is on in the room, the door is open and unlocked. What do I do?

A. To reduce the risk of a HIPAA violation, you should shut and lock the door so patient medical records are kept safe and secure. After locking the door, you should report the incident by following your facility's security incident reporting procedures.

Q. Will hospitals where patients share rooms have to be remodeled to create single-bed rooms?

A. No, HIPAA does not require this, according to the Privacy of Health Information/HIPAA Questions and Answers on the Department of Health and Human Services Web site.¹ For more details, see Web site.

Q. In an exam room, a physician's pager goes off while a patient is in the room. The physician steps away for a moment to use a phone in another room. If the physician uses a computer with protected health information (PHI) in the exam room, what should be done before leaving the room?

A. Before leaving the room, the physician should remove confidential information from the computer screen to prevent unauthorized disclosure and should lock the computer session to prevent anyone from accessing health information.

Q. I've heard that I can't leave my patient a voicemail because others may overhear or retrieve the message before the patient does. Is this true?

A. No. You can still leave your patient a message on his or her answering machine. To safeguard the patient's privacy, however, you should limit the amount of information you disclose on an answering machine. Unless asked not to do so by your patient, you are allowed to leave a message with a family member or other person who answers the phone when the patient is not home.

Q. I heard that, under HIPAA, families can no longer eat with a patient they are visiting because they could find out additional information such as if he or she is on a restricted diet. Is this true?

A. This is not true. HIPAA does not state that families can no longer eat with a patient. It's important to remember that HIPAA offers reasonable guidelines.

Using common-sense requirements, HIPAA makes physicians more conscious of confidentiality by supporting practice with added policies and procedures. Physicians already know many of the HIPAA basics, from not discussing patient information in elevators and cafeterias to making sure that computer passwords are kept confidential. HIPAA helps start identifying instances in which people might be inadvertently releasing PHI.



Being aware of our surroundings while completing routine tasks is crucial. Even the method used to handle trash can be a HIPAA violation waiting to happen. Physicians may have several trash bins ... for recyclables, regular trash and shredded documents. We must make a concerted effort to put garbage that may contain PHI in the right receptacle as well as to limit access to those receptacles to follow HIPAA guidelines.

If you have HIPAA questions, contact Patricia Tooley at (713) 448-5910.