

# **Quality Improvement Initiative – *Surgical Services***

## **Aim**

Gifford Medical Center is working to improve patient satisfaction with the hospital's Surgical Services experience and improve department efficiency by:

1. Decreasing late starts in the operating rooms and minor procedure rooms
2. Decreasing turnover time between operating room cases

## **Time Frame**

This project began in June 2007 and is ongoing.

## **Description**

Most surgeries are scheduled weeks in advance. Successful outcomes require that many professionals participate in the patient preparation and the surgery or procedure. The need for information, and variability of the procedures, impacts the experience. Patients preparing for surgery expend a tremendous amount of time and effort getting ready for the scheduled event. When surgeries start late the impact is far reaching. Late surgeries may negatively influence:

1. Patient satisfaction
2. Staff satisfaction, morale and retention
3. Physician satisfaction
4. Gifford's financial health

## **Description of the problem**

Historically, cases in the operating room were scheduled with only the first case given a start time; all subsequent cases were scheduled "to follow." Increased surgical volume, however, required a more efficient scheduling system that could also produce important data.

## **Project goals with appropriate measures**

1. Modify patient arrival times to reduce pre-operative waits
2. Have 80 percent of all operations and minor procedures will start within 15 minutes of the booked/scheduled time
3. Improve turnover time to no greater than 20 minutes (from anesthesia end time to anesthesia start time of the next case) between cases

## **Description of the intervention(s)**

- 1) "OR Manager," a computer program for scheduling surgery cases and procedures, was implemented, and all surgeries and procedures are now scheduled with specific start times. OR Manager also tracks the length of each case, including the time required to clean the room before another surgery can be performed. Prior to OR Manager, there was insufficient data.
- 2) Surgical Services meetings with consensus building for policy changes have begun.
- 3) Policies and procedures have been created for scheduling operative/invasive procedures.
- 4) Patients are given scheduled procedure times versus approximate times.

- 5) Patient satisfaction surveys are distributed to Surgical Services patients.
- 6) Two support staff (full-time equivalents) have been hired to assist in room turnover and readiness.
- 7) Equipment has been purchased for cleaning operating room floors between cases.
- 8) Data on turnaround time between cases and late starts is being collected.

### **Evaluation Process and Results**

Implementing the OR Manager scheduling system enabled Surgical Services to improve patient, staff and physician satisfaction. The information the hospital now obtains from OR Manager is providing baseline data. And Surgical Services staff, trained in Toyota Lean improvement methodology, are now using this data to improve turnaround time between cases and late starts.

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