

Regions Hospital (Saint Paul, MN)

Improving Care Team Communication & Patient Experience



OVERVIEW

The Regions Hospital Emergency Department is a recognized high performer in terms of patient experience. It realized high performance through a series of efforts including: training of staff and physicians through established standards and principles of patient experience and use of AIDET, standardized uniforms for staff, and the construction of a new ED facility within the last 5 years. Despite these efforts, however, they had seen some slips in their patient experience scores in the first two quarters of 2014.

SITUATION

The internal Best Care Best Experience Department for Regions was at capacity and unable to support what the Emergency Department leadership needed in terms of focused improvements. Collectively, they engaged DTA Associates to help them get back on track and identify improvements to sustain them into the future

STRATEGY AND APPROACH

DTA was engaged as an extension of existing internal resources for patient experience. Initially DTA provided a series of patient-level observations where an observer would, with the patient's permission, follow them throughout their journey in the Emergency department. Next, ED Leadership engaged DTA to offer Care Team Coaching for up to 50 staff, residents and physician assistants. Most of the physicians had already participated in the internal coaching program.

"Regions emergency providers have benefited greatly from the work of DTA Associates. Through focused departmental and individual feedback, ongoing education, and creative thinking sessions we have set clear achievable goals for our department to improve patient satisfaction."

— KURT ISENBERGER, MD MEDICAL DIRECTOR OF EMERGENCY SERVICES, REGIONS HOSPITAL ASSISTANT PROFESSOR, EMERGENCY MEDICINE, UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA MEDICAL SCHOOL

"The DTA team quickly became part of the staff. They create a very comfortable environment in which staff and patients feel safe and respected. Their follow-through and reporting is excellent and they keep the process moving. DTA Associates exceeded my expectations. "

— RICHELLE JADER, RN, BSN, MHA, DIRECTOR OF EMERGENCY SERVICES, REGIONS HOSPITAL

Care Team Members testimonials speak to the success of these efforts:

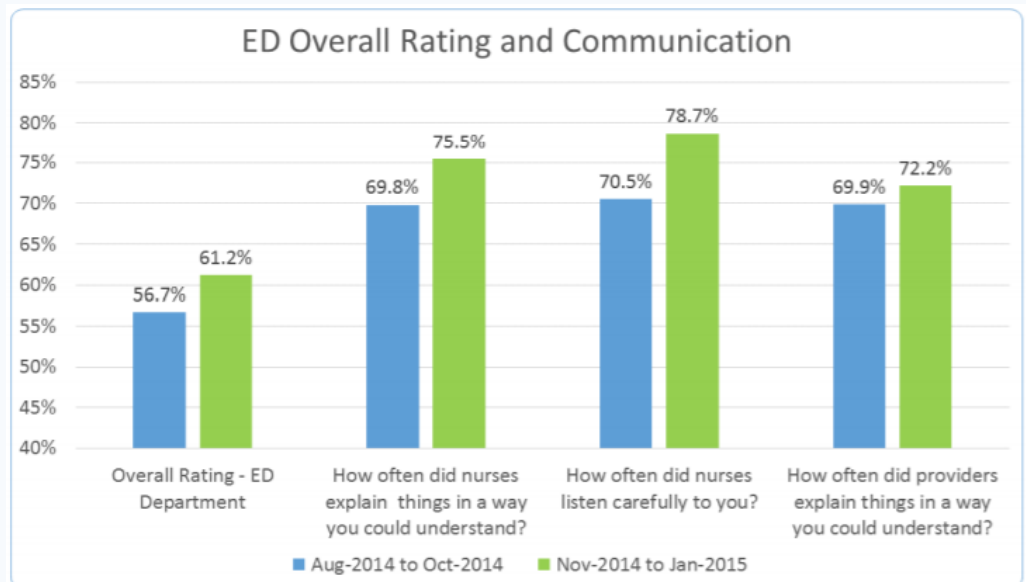
- "I was able to have outside perspective on my interactions and to identify areas of improvement."
- "I appreciate how the coach helps me to build on my strengths with subtle but significant changes, rather than trying an entirely new approach or rhythm."
- "Thank you so much for such a positive shadowing experience. The coach was very professional and also very kind. The coach made me feel comfortable and natural. I tried to do several of the suggestions during the last half of the shift such as asking permission to use the computer. They seemed natural and I think I can do them. The time with the coach was very helpful and will help me provide better service to many patients."

PATIENT OBSERVATION REVIEW

- Observations occurred over 10 days in July
 - Day, evening, and night shifts included
 - 25 patients agreed to allow the DTA team to accompany them on their journey
 - Saw patients from a variety of intake methods and ultimate discharge dispositions
 - 95 different caregivers observed
 - Patients on average saw 5 to 6 caregivers
- Based on the observations a series of report-outs occurred for staff and providers
 - Patient voices projected and themes were identified by department and role
- Several area observations and recommendations were made to leadership

COACHING COMMUNICATION

50 caregivers from Regions participated in 1:1 care team coaching in October and November 2014. After each observation, the coach and participant debriefed on personal strengths and opportunities. Following the observation, each participant was sent an evaluation form as well as their own written report. The thematic results from the department and role observations were also included. This written report is kept confidential between the coach and the participant. In the following months a series of group report-outs occurred where those coached were able to convene and hear group-level themes from those participating in coaching with no individual results shared.



RESULTS

Data is young but comparing the quarter before and the quarter after the coaching, Regions recognized as much as a 10% topbox improvement in: nursing communication (listening & explaining things in a way patients understand), provider communication (explanations), and overall rating.

DTA is a patient-centered quality improvement consultancy serving hospitals, clinics and health care systems. They have core competencies in process and technology improvement aimed at enhancing the patient experience and empowering physicians and other clinical staff to resolve quality shortfalls. Leveraging technology and analytics that engage physicians and drive process improvements, they help clients make progress on specific goals, ultimately leaving them with the skills they need to achieve goals independently and with confidence.