Rush University Medical Center
Chicago, IL

- Licensed beds: 664
- Cleanable Square Footage: 3.3 million
- Productivity: 1,950 SqFt/Hr
- Staff:Manager Ratio: 18:1
- Key Program Elements:
  • 1 Patient Experience Manager
  • Reward and recognition
  • Picture perfect
  • Scripting
  • Non-verbal cues of clean
  • Digestible data posting

Rush University Medical Center proves that even in a challenging environment, when focused on the right goals, a team can make remarkable improvements. Crothall has been serving Rush since 1996, but when the HCAHPS survey was introduced, Rush and the EVS team were disappointed with their scores, which were as low as 63 in early 2010. Change does not come easily in a large, challenging, urban, union environment such as Rush University Medical Center. Associate Vice President Alicia Smith and Crothall Resident Regional Manager Denise Wiley realized that HCAHPS required a specific focus, not just on cleaning quality, but on elements of Patient Experience that would require everyone’s full commitment. Key stakeholders from Rush and the Housekeeping Services department formed a Process Improvement initiative to identify any barriers to improvement, survey all stakeholders to gain insights, and make changes to drive a quick turnaround. According to Smith, “To achieve real performance improvement, it is important to remove finger-pointing and blame from the table and begin with a transparent review of your operations.” The goal was to take the EVS program from merely delivering housekeeping services to creating a “wow” experience for every patient. This meant reallocating resources, redesigning task frequencies, and addressing facility-related challenges outside the control of EVS.

HCAHPS Cleanliness Score

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Score</th>
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<tr>
<td>2010</td>
<td>63</td>
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<tr>
<td>2012</td>
<td>75</td>
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Not surprisingly, the real key was motivating the hourly associates to better understand their responsibility and impact. A Patient Experience manager was hired, and HCAHPS training was built into the agenda of every staff meeting. Today, unit-specific HCAHPS data is used to glean best practices and transfer them to lower-performing units. All scores are posted in the department, and patient comments show how the team’s efforts really do make an impact. Associates are recognized and rewarded for improvement, and all performance evaluations are tied to HCAHPS scores.

Managers strive to form positive relationships with all hospital care leaders to focus on the patient. EVS created a “Patient Touch Blast” communication that goes out to hospital managers to communicate both successes and any red flags that can help improve service recovery. EVS managers round every day to head off patient needs before they become problems, and the Patient Experience Manager meets with as many patients prior to discharge as possible.

Even after 15 years in a challenging environment, the Rush team has shown that it is possible to infuse new energy into the partnership. HCAHPS scores have risen to 75 as of January 2012. With continuous commitment, consistency, and collaboration, the Rush Housekeeping team is sure to meet and exceed its goals.