

IOWA HOSPITAL NETWORK INITIATIVES

Team work, open communication, and grant funding; some of which has been provided by the Iowa FLEX program, has contributed to the implementation of a variety of Iowa hospital network-wide initiatives.

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Current Network Wide Initiatives - Electronic Health Record (EHR): Partnership between the Network CAHs, Mercy Medical Center, North Iowa and Trinity Health, led to an integrated electronic health record that was implemented at seven of the CAHs. This effort included analysis and understanding of current state of medication formularies, orders and order sets, documentation forms, hardware and infrastructure, and baseline computer knowledge of staff. Work was accomplished through interdisciplinary teams. The first group of hospitals went live with the EHR in July 2008 and the second group in September 2008. This effort was partially funded and supported by a grant from the Agency for Healthcare research and Quality (AHRQ). FLEX funding was utilized to assist with Network team planning and for the purchase of computers on wheels for the CAHs to support EHR implementation. Patient safety is improved with immediate availability of the patient’s medical record as well as the latest evidence based care guidelines which are built into the system.

Medication Safety: Network teams working together have successfully implemented a number of changes relative to medication safety. A common network wide formulary was developed and the network contracted a third-party pharmacy for after hours and weekend pharmacist review and verification. A bar code medication administration system allows the nurse to scan a patient’s wristband and medication, both bar-coded, to verify what are known as the “Five Rights” of medication administration: right patient, right medication, right dose, right route, and right time. Once confirmed, the medication is administered to the patient, and the information transfers to the electronic health record. In addition to the quality checks performed by the system, having the administration documented electronically in a real – time format, and updating the EMR, improves patient safety as well as nurse workflow. FLEX provided direct funding to some of the individual CAHs within the network to assist them with the implementation of medication administration and safety.

HealthStream: HealthStream is a computerized program that was put in place for the CAHs within the network to offer and share online education courses. These courses can be developed and customized at the local site, by the Network or Trinity Health, or by an outside provider. Employee education records can be fully managed by the system. HealthStream was implemented by the Network and supported by FLEX grant funding in the summer of 2009.

New Network Initiatives - Process Excellence (PEX): The eight network CAHs have embarked on a journey toward Process Excellence, using a systematic approach in the identification and elimination of waste or non value-added activities through continuous improvement in all products and services provided to patients. Improved communication through the use of daily Huddles, or brief Team Meetings, is used to share information, get general questions addressed, and stimulate ideas for improvement. Huddles are attended by all department staff and help to keep communication between team members and leaders flowing. Each hospital has implemented Huddles in their Nursing department and will be moving forward with extending huddles to other departments. The benefits recognized from huddles include decreased meeting time for staff and timely practical problem solving. The Network is also planning Rapid Improvement Process events to improve the organization of the work environment, reduce waste and excess inventory, and maximize efficient use of space

Christy Syndergaard, CNO at Mitchell County Health Center says, “The Huddles have noticeably enhanced the engagement of our staff, especially the ‘Ideas in Motion.’ Staff now has a public avenue to voice their ideas to improve processes, no matter how big or small. In the past 3 months 92 ideas for process improvement and 82 have been completed. That is a huge win for all!”

“Yes We Can” Families Working Together to Prevent Diabetes: The Network was awarded funds from the Health Resources Services (HRSA) Administration for a new project to identify and screen individuals and families that may be at risk for diabetes. The project will directly serve 3,000 persons located across an eight county region of north central Iowa that has an exceptionally high and rapidly growing rate of diabetes. Diabetic Educators in each of the eight Mercy Health Network hospitals have been actively involved in developing and implementing the programs in their local areas.

“Over the next three years, our project will conduct pre-diabetes/diabetes community screenings for high-risk adults and children,” explains Laura Zwiefel, Hancock County Memorial Hospital Director of Nursing/Clinical Services and the Project Administrator for the grant project. The grant projects will also design and offer educational classes for families who have

high-risk factors for developing diabetes. "By offering the whole family pre-diabetes education with enjoyable opportunities to exercise and eat healthy foods, we hope to delay the onset of Type 2 diabetes and its destructive complications."

Mock Surveys: The Network Nursing and Patient Care Team (NN&PCT) coordinate the mock survey process, which provide an opportunity to see each organization's regulatory survey readiness through the eyes of peers prior to an actual survey. Outcomes of the mock survey include: education of hospital staff; the opportunity to analyze and act on any deficiencies found during the mock survey process; sharing of information; and maintaining knowledge of current regulatory standards. Scott Curtis, CEO/Administrator at Kossuth Regional Health Center sums up the benefits of the Network when he says, "Our relationship is developed upon a premise of mutual interdependence which has resulted in an extensive sharing of resources, talent and opportunity. I can't imagine our success at Kossuth Regional Health Center being possible without this relationship in place."

Past Network Initiatives - Over the past few years network teams have focused on:

- Diabetic Education
- PEERS—an electronic event (incident) reporting system
- Patient Safety assessments and process changes including implementation of the Joint Commission's National Patient Safety Goals.
- QA: Development and implementation of a common format (red, yellow, green) for reporting of quality measures. Participation in Network wide and statewide reporting.
- Patient-family visitor guides.
- CHF patient notebooks.
- Fall Prevention
- Skin Care Program
- Competency Based Orientation
- Infection Control Initiatives
- 100,000 Lives / 5 Million Lives campaigns

Mercy Health Network - North Iowa

