

Reducing Readmissions from Skilled Nursing Facilities Utilizing Lean Six Sigma Principles and Strategies

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Introduction

The Agency for Healthcare Quality and Research (AHRQ, 2019), reports that patients readmitted to the hospital are at increased risk for developing infections, having medication errors, missing important follow-up appointments, and falling, while fragmented communication at discharge can leave already weak and ill patients even more vulnerable. In May 2019, 14.2% of patients discharged from UPMC Hamot to skilled nursing facilities (SNF) were readmitted within thirty days. It is hypothesized that utilizing a tool to improve communication at discharge will assist in reducing SNF readmissions throughout the organization.

SNF/Rehab Transfer Communication Tool

Advanced Directives: Full Code/DNR/CMD

Patient Sticker

SNF: _____ Phone #: _____
D/C Time: _____ Mode of Transport: W/C/ stretcher

Allergies: _____
Diagnosis: _____
Surgery Procedure: _____
Ambulatory Status: _____ Transfer Status: _____
Daily Weight: Yes/No _____ Diet: _____

Other consideration for safe transition:

Assessment	Patient assessment with last set of vitals:
Last Bowel Movement	Date/Time:
Abnormal Findings	Assessment/Lab/Tests:
O2 Requirements	Nasal Canula/CPAP/BIPAP/Settings:
Isolation	Active or History:
Consults	Service/Reason:
Insulin	Last dose given/time:
Pain Medication	Time given:
Reason for Pain Rx	Controlled Substance Rx on Chart: Yes/No
Comadmin	Dose: _____ Medication: (Heparin/Lovenox)
VTE Prophylaxis	Last INR: _____ SCDs: Yes/No
Antibiotic	Last dose given:
Wound Care	Location/frequency of care:
Foley	Insert date/Reason/Duration:
Drains	Location:
PKC	Insert date/location:
TPN	Formula/Rate:
Hemodialysis	Schedule:
Special Equipment Needed	Ex. Bariatric Bed, Wound VAC, etc.

Discharge double check:
(Verify updated clinical summary & Rx are in transfer packet)
Report given to: _____

Conclusion

Reducing readmissions is a complex and multifaceted. A peer reviewed study conducted by Rahman, McHugh, Gozalo, Ackerly, and Mor (2017), explored various factors associated with readmissions from SNFs. The study concluded that the quality of care provided at the SNF, hospital length of stay, and number of patient comorbidities all serve to contribute to hospital readmission. Improving communication is a step forward to reducing readmissions in this complex patient population. In the future, we will continue to collect project data and take steps to foster improvements.

Methods

Utilizing Lean Six Sigma's DMAIC (Define, Measure, Analyze, Improve, Control) process, an interprofessional team at UPMC Hamot developed a tool to improve nursing communication when a patient is discharged to a SNF. According to Muraliraj, Zailani, Kuppusamy, and Santha (2018), developing process improvements utilizing strategies from Lean Six Sigma serves to decrease costs, improve performance, improve quality, reduce defects, and reduce variation. Through this process, a tool was developed to assist in standardizing nurse to nurse report when a patient is discharged to a SNF. Once the tool was developed, it was implemented throughout the organization utilizing plan, do, study, act methodologies.

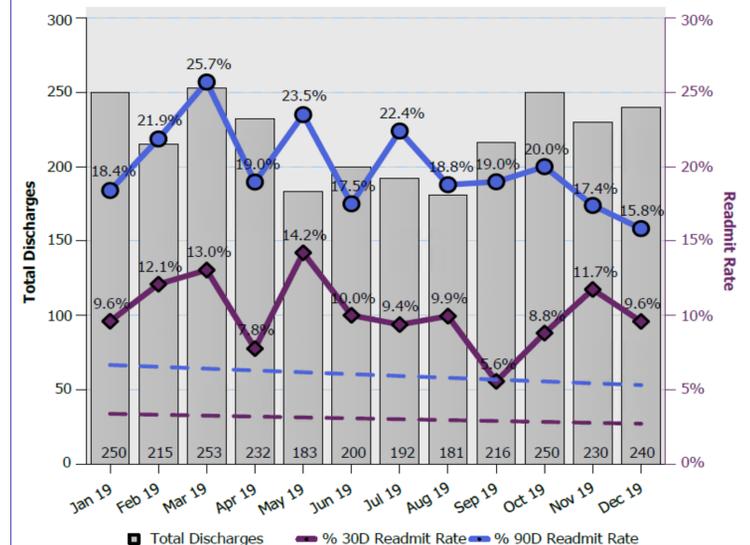
Lean Six Sigma



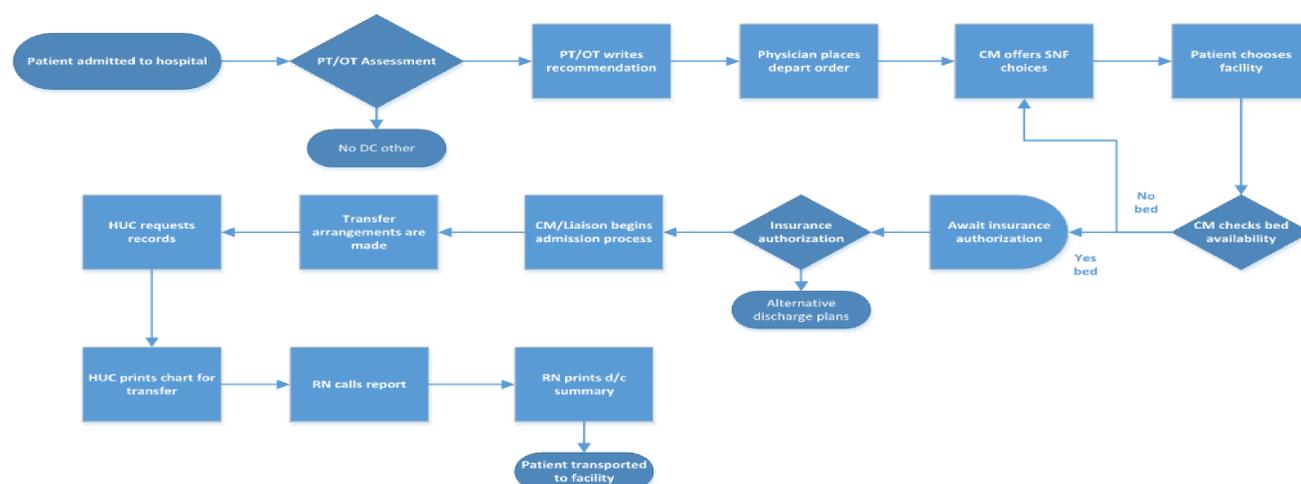
Results

The SNF communication tool was successfully implemented throughout the organization in August 2019. Following the implementation readmission rates slightly decreased September 2019 (5.6%), October 2019 (8.8%), November 2019 (11.7%), & December 2019 (9.6%). We are also collecting the tool each month and collecting data to review if the tool was utilized and if the patient was readmitted, as well as, collecting data for compliance

Patients Discharged to SNF and Readmission Rate



SNF Discharge Process Map



References

- Agency for Healthcare Quality and Research. (2019). Readmissions and adverse events after discharge. Retrieved from <https://psnet.ahrq.gov/primers/primer/11/readmissions-and-adverse-events-after-discharge>
- Muraliraj, J., Zailani, S., Kuppusamy, S., & Santha, C. (2018). Annotated methodological review of lean six sigma. *International Journal of Lean Six Sigma*, 9(1), 2-49. doi:10.1108/IJLSS-04-2017-0028
- Rahman, M., McHugh, J., Gozalo, P. L., Ackerly, D. C., & Mor, V. (2017). The contribution of skilled nursing facilities to hospitals' readmission rate. *Health Services Research*, 52(2), 656-675. <https://doi.org/10.1111/1475-6773.12507>