



Operating Room Performance Improvement at Greater Baltimore Medical Center

Situation

Greater Baltimore Medical Center (GBMC), Maryland, lacked a governance structure to monitor its perioperative services and operating room (OR) utilization, resulting in underused ORs and excessive downtime between surgical cases.

A scorecard of operating room performance indicated subpar performance for the hospital's 25 operating rooms (ORs), a costly misstep considering that perioperative services typically generates nearly 60 percent of a hospital's revenue¹.

Specific areas of concern were:

- First surgical cases of the day were started on-time in only 67 percent of the cases; best practice is a minimum of 90 percent first-case on-time starts
- OR utilization was 62 percent,; best practice is at least 75 percent
- Year over year operating room case volume had actually declined by 7 percent



Solution

Surgical Directions conducted a comprehensive assessment of the hospital's practices that involved meetings with c-suite executives and all levels of administrators, clinicians, and staff, including frontline caregivers and schedulers.

For example, we asked schedulers about current methods of scheduling surgical cases, and materials managers described how they manage supply inventory. On-site observations of OR processes were also critical in identifying problems. For example, when a circulating nurse left an OR several times to retrieve supplies, it became clear that inventory of supplies in the OR was insufficient.

The improvement process began with creating a surgical services executive committee comprised of surgeons representing the hospital's service lines, along with administrative and medical executives, such as the chief operating officer, chief nursing officer, and anesthesia medical director. The committee was charged with developing definitions for metrics to be used to gauge OR performance (e.g., how is utilization defined) and providing direction and oversight of improvement plans. In addition, Surgical Directions helped GBMC form process improvement teams made of frontline staff who help to develop new approaches and manage implementation of new processes.

Results

Surgical Directions, working with the hospital to implement an aggressive work plan, has helped transform current practices in all areas of the OR, significantly improving performance. In only six months, the first case on-time start rate jumped to 75 percent with OR utilization improving to 73 percent. This resulted in case volume growth of 26% providing a spark to hospital revenues and a more solid foundation for meeting the community's healthcare needs.