Increasing the Use of a Hospital Discharge Suite to Improve Patient Flow: a Quality Improvement Project

RUTGERS School of Nursing

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Introduction

- Discharged patients occupy inpatient beds waiting for rides or completion of the discharge process
- Overcrowding in the ER and ICUs
- Goal of this project = improve usage of a pre-existing discharge suite
- The purpose of the discharge suite is to provide an organized area for patients to receive discharge education, wait for transportation, outpatient medications, and home equipment.
- Increasing the usage of the discharge suite allowed opportunities for the ER and other areas of the hospital to transfer patients to inpatient beds and improve the flow of patients throughout the entire hospital.

Background

- Use of the discharge lounge can improve issues throughout other parts of the hospital
- Optimal discharge experience → reduction in readmission rates
- Discharge lounges are used throughout the U.S. and internationally
- Consequences of overcrowding and increased wait times: suboptimal medical care and patient outcomes, delay in care, increased in readmission and mortality rates, medical errors, and risk of diversion.
- Early administration of appropriate treatment.

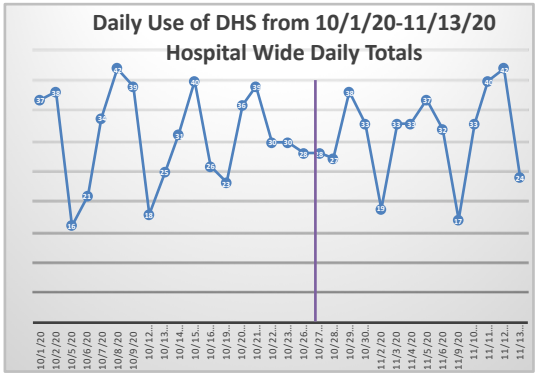
Objectives

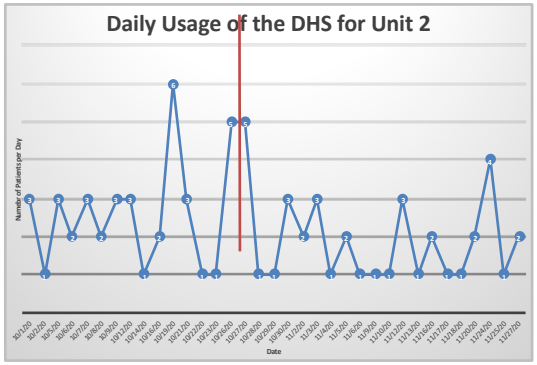
- Identify factors that may facilitate or be a barrier to the usage of the discharge suite
- Increase the number of patients that are transferred to the discharge suite on a daily basis
- Decrease the number of inpatient admissions that are holding in the ER due to lack of inpatient beds.

Region	Hospital Wait Times
U.S.	139 min.
N.J.	160 min.
Project Site	185 min.

Methods

- Quality Improvement Project Evaluation
- Establishment of an average of how many patients use of the discharge suite on a daily basis
- Discharge Hospitality Suite Patient Intake Form was evaluated
- New form clearly outlining inclusion/exclusion criteria and checklist was created
- New form was distributed among two units and staff was educated on the use of the new form
- Only information regarding the number of patients using the discharge suite and which units the patients were originally admitted to was collected.

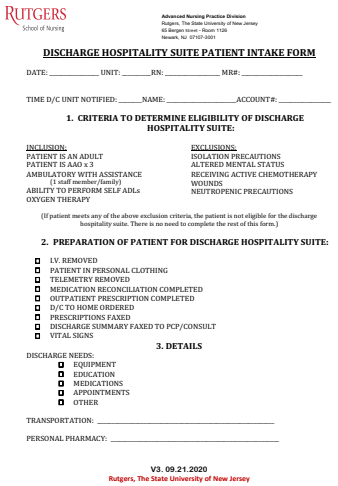




Results

- Data points collected: number of patients using the discharge suite each day and which unit they originate from in the hospital
- Unit 1
  - Pre-implementation: 3.2 patients/day
  - Post-implementation: 2.7 patients/day
- Unit 2
  - Pre-implementation: 2.6 patients/day
  - Post-implementation: 1.9 patients/day

Overall usage of the DHS decreased and no improvement was noted.



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DISCHARGE HOSPITALITY SUITE PATIENT INTAKE FORM

DATE: _____ UNIT: _____RN: _____ MR#: _____

TIME D/C UNIT NOTIFIED: _____NAME: _____ACCOUNT#: _____

1. CRITERIA TO DETERMINE ELIGIBILITY OF DISCHARGE HOSPITALITY SUITE:

INCLUSION:
PATIENT IS AN ADULT
PATIENT IS AAO x 3
AMBULATORY WITH ASSISTANCE (1 staff member/family)
ABILITY TO PERFORM SELF ADLs
OXYGEN THERAPY

EXCLUSIONS:
ISOLATION PRECAUTIONS
ALTERED MENTAL STATUS
RECEIVING ACTIVE CHEMOTHERAPY
WOUNDS
NEUTROPENIC PRECAUTIONS

(If patient meets any of the above exclusion criteria, the patient is not eligible for the discharge hospitality suite. There is no need to complete the rest of this form.)

2. PREPARATION OF PATIENT FOR DISCHARGE HOSPITALITY SUITE:

- I.V. REMOVED
- PATIENT IN PERSONAL CLOTHING
- TELEMETRY REMOVED
- MEDICATION RECONCILIATION COMPLETED
- OUTPATIENT PRESCRIPTION COMPLETED
- D/C TO HOME ORDERED
- PRESCRIPTIONS FAXED
- DISCHARGE SUMMARY FAXED TO PCP/CONSULT
- VITAL SIGNS

3. DETAILS

DISCHARGE NEEDS:
- EQUIPMENT
- EDUCATION
- MEDICATIONS
- APPOINTMENTS
- OTHER

TRANSPORTATION: _____

PERSONAL PHARMACY: _____

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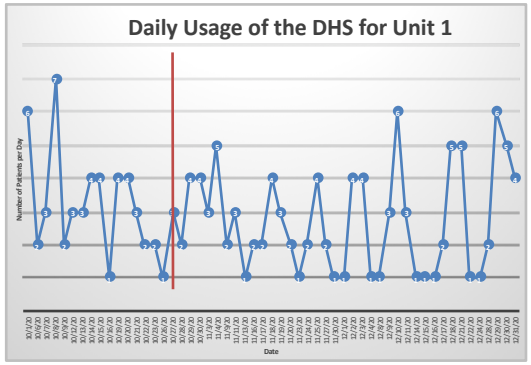

Conclusions

- Daily use of the discharge suite did not increase.
- Economic benefits: DHS has potential for improving patient flow and deceasing backflow of inpatient admissions in the ER and OR.
- Healthcare quality implications: transfer of patients to the appropriate level of care, improved patient outcomes, ensured procedures are completed in a timely manner.
- Hospital will plan to incorporate findings to other units throughout the hospital to help increase use of the discharge suite.
- Future project options include repurposing DHS nurse onto the inpatient units.

Limitations

- Cooperation with unit staff
- Receptiveness to change
- COVID 19

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