

Accelerating Patient Experience Improvements

HOW ONE HOSPITAL MADE PATIENT EXPERIENCE AN ORGANIZATIONWIDE PRIORITY

A mid-Atlantic hospital worked with Huron to design a leadership development program to improve overall care and elevate its patient experience scores.

Challenge

While the hospital maintained high performance across quality outcomes, its patient experience results needed improvement to meet the health system's high standards for overall care. The hospital's patient experience Hospital Consumer Assessment of Healthcare Providers and Systems (HCAHPS) scores were below system benchmarks, preventing it from maximizing reimbursement in its state.

Leaders took action to make improvements with an internal patient experience playbook. Looking to accelerate progress, the hospital sought an adviser to keep the organization accountable while offering industry insights to improve performance.

Approach

The hospital leadership team and Huron worked together to develop a plan to engage and mobilize employees in the organization's journey to improve the patient experience.

Recognizing that improving the care experience of their patients extended beyond nursing care, the executive team sought a holistic approach that activated all leaders and staff across the organization to deliver an excellent experience for every patient, every time.

Results

Moved five HCAHPS composites **over the 50th percentile**

Ranked **above the 75th percentile** nationally for the rate of change in three composites

Increased top box score for **nurse communication and responsiveness** greater than six percentile points

Moved from bottom quartile performance to **top decile in 18 months**

Huron and the hospital worked to assess and identify opportunities for improvement in patients' care experiences. From there, they developed an approach inclusive of the following:

Real-time coaching and feedback:

The hospital and Huron teams worked together to deliver coaching on-site. This face-to-face approach to coaching enabled individuals across all disciplines at the executive and front-line levels to better execute their existing playbook practices and receive real-time feedback.

A cornerstone of the plan was a training initiative rooted in the CEO's prioritization of learning, the customization of content, and accessibility for all.

The training occurred in three forms:

- 1. Nursing cohort:** Because the hospital had a young nursing leadership team, creating a learning cohort specifically for nurses and nurse leaders was critical. Huron identified leadership gaps among the nursing team and collaborated to customize a curriculum that addressed each area of improvement in order to deliver significant leadership development.
- 2. Online learning for all:** Huron helped the hospital deploy a scalable online learning solution across clinical and nonclinical staff to share leading patient experience practices and build skills with personalized learning plans. This virtual learning platform was accessible to all leaders and staff, and expectations were implemented to ensure maximum participation.
- 3. Leadership development:** In addition to online learning, the hospital implemented scenario-based training and applications to improve the patient experience. The curriculum was built from actual events at the hospital and trained leaders on how to respond. This scenario-based training addressed many issues ranging from managing staff performance to using leading practices for engaging with patients and family members.

Discipline and rigor for accountability and compliance:

The hospital leadership expected and achieved 90% or greater compliance and participation in all training modules to ensure effectiveness. This CEO-driven initiative achieved accountability using a top-down approach despite high turnover at the C-suite level.

At the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, the organization continued to push for accountability and perseverance for all patient experience initiatives. With this expectation in place, the hospital maintained the same learning and training deliverables throughout the pandemic, leading to better patient care and increased HCAHPS scores even as it grappled with COVID-19 response and management.

This case study features a faith-based healthcare organization with more than 2,000 employees and a net patient revenue greater than \$400 million.



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