



BUILDING A CULTURE OF SAFETY AT ST. TAMMANY HEALTH SYSTEM

Seeking to expedite their journey to zero harm, St. Tammany Health System (STHS) applied high reliability best practices to improve quality and increase safety throughout the organization.

CHALLENGE

After working with Huron to improve employee engagement, STHS turned its focus toward safety. The organization was aware of safety challenges that were negatively impacting quality outcomes, patient experience and flow in the emergency department. Recognizing these challenges as roadblocks on its journey to zero harm, STHS sought to apply and adhere to best practices for highly reliable organizations (HRO) in an effort to advance quality, build a culture of safety and improve safety event reporting and response.

“At St. Tammany Health System, we are dedicated to achieving zero harm, and we have found the assistance of Huron to be indispensable on our journey to high reliability. They have taught us how to use our own data to find the places where improvement is needed. They have taught us how to hardwire excellence by creating habits and pathways of care. We are grateful to the Huron coaches and collective team for helping us achieve our mission as the heartbeat of our community, caring for patients and families with excellence, compassion and teamwork.”

JOAN COFFMAN, CEO

RESULTS

Overall patient safety grade increased from **81% in 2017 to 89% in 2019**

Healthcare-associated infections decreased by **24%**

Surgical site infections decreased by **67%**

Emergency department door-to-provider time was reduced from **25 minutes to 18 minutes**

Left-without-being-seen percentage decreased from **1.33% to 0.67%**

APPROACH

Huron conducted a high reliability gap analysis, revealing specific areas of risk throughout the organization. Huron provided a road map of high reliability and safety practices to implement along the organization’s journey to zero harm, enabled by a leadership alignment framework. This framework included aligned zero harm goals, evidence-based accountability behaviors, and leader and staff development, which maximized the organization’s ability to achieve and sustain results.

RESULTS

Increasing alignment and communication. In addition to establishing HRO summits intended to broadly communicate safety information, Huron also helped expand existing daily leadership safety huddles, which included daily reports of safety concerns by leaders from across the system, a focused agenda and a plan for follow-up communication. Making the flow of safety information efficient, targeted and habitual enabled the organization to respond faster to safety incidents or avoid them entirely.

Increasing visibility. Monthly reviews of safety events as well as annual assessments of safety risk and readiness increased visibility into the organization's operations, allowing STHS to better identify and analyze patient quality data. Huron and STHS worked collaboratively to advance quality and safety data reporting, which made it easier for the organization to uncover safety issues and then solve for those problems.

Improving emergency department flow. Resetting the expectations for staff, redesigning flow in the lobby and instituting best practices for direct bedding of patients helped STHS progress toward high reliability by reducing wait times and left-without-being-seen percentages in less than 10

months. Huron worked with leaders to relaunch the emergency department steering team and establish shared ownership of key areas directly related to emergency room operations, which lessened the strain on triage.

These measures aided in accelerating the system's journey to zero harm while also improving the patient experience and emergency department flow. With standardized processes, regular communication and a growing culture of safety, the system is excelling in achieving its mission of providing life-improving care.

St. Tammany Health System (STHS) is a local hospital in Louisiana dedicated to providing life-improving care through the use of state-of-the-art technology.



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