Texas Children’s Hospital (TCH) had recently completed a large-scale expansion of services and facilities, including the implementation of an electronic medical record (EMR). The combination of new staff, space, services, and a pending change in the pediatric payer environment, plus an influx of capacity constraints and bed availability issues, heightened the need for operational efficiency.

OUR APPROACH

**Redesigned patient flow:** By designing and implementing a new patient flow reporting and accountability structure, Huron helped TCH improve patient flow and operational performance. Improvements were also realized through the implementation of patient flow meetings and restructured patient placement, environmental services, and patient escort functions.

**Optimized technology:** Huron assisted in configuring technology to support best practice processes and also in the design and implementation of new tools, including an electronic bedboard and a care management software system. These steps improved utilization review, discharge planning, payer communication, and staff productivity. In addition, new flow sheets for the EMR system helped improve access to actionable metrics and drive patient throughput.

**Coordinated care management:** The project team designed and instituted multidisciplinary care progression meetings across the units, ensuring greater coordination of care. Huron and TCH also worked collaboratively to institute weekly clinical high-risk meetings, which help address and resolve barriers to efficient patient flow, efficient care, and care transitions.

**Care variation management:** Huron and TCH worked with physicians, nurses, and ancillary providers to streamline care, reduce variation, and enhance existing evidence-based standards of care in select DRGs. The group used lean methodology and processes as the structure to perform this work.

**Enhanced role clarification:** Roles and responsibilities were optimized through the design and implementation of a new department staffing model. New roles include an access care manager, as well as a physician advisor position that supports crucial roles in improved utilization review and resource management. The result is a more nimble organization that can flex to meet anticipated and unanticipated changes in volume.

RESULTS & BENEFITS

- **38% reduction** in acute care red census alert hours.
- **Created capacity to serve** 2,296 additional patients per year.
- **8% reduction** in readmissions to the hospital within 48 hours.

“...The Huron Healthcare project surpassed our goals and generated many improvements, including significant financial benefits. However, it’s the human factor of being able to serve more patients, save more lives, and live up to TCH’s reputation in the community that’s most valuable.”

Jackie Ward  
MSN-HCSM, RN, NE-BC  
Assistant Vice President of Nursing Texas Children’s Cancer & Hematology Centers and Inpatient Acute Care Units