

Memorial Hospital Pembroke describes how it became a top performer in Premier/CMS project



Florida hospital shares Healthcare Quality Incentive Demonstration journey

In the first year of the CMS/Premier Healthcare Quality Incentive Demonstration Project (HQID), Memorial Hospital Pembroke in Pembroke Pines, Fla., finished a disappointing sixth decile for acute myocardial infarction (AMI), seventh decile for heart failure and eighth decile for community-acquired pneumonia. By year two the hospital had improved its results substantially: second decile for AMI and third decile for both pneumonia and heart failure.

In year three it all came together and Memorial Hospital Pembroke found itself among the HQID leaders in three of five clinical areas for which it was eligible, finishing in either the first or second deciles for all the three measures. The hospital had truly reached a milestone.

How did the hospital improve so dramatically over three short years? What's the secret to its success? Key players in the turnaround shared some of the answers to those and other questions about the project at the Memorial Hospital Pembroke CMS/Premier HQID Top Performer Open House held October 10, 2007, at the Renaissance Fort Lauderdale Plantation Hotel in Plantation, Fla.

More than 150 hospital representatives from across the nation attended the one-day site visit and seminar. The presentation reviewed steps taken throughout the three-year journey to achieve and sustain breakthrough performance levels and achieve top performer recognition. Through implementation of effective leadership strategies, support from physician champions and collaboration among disciplines, the hospital was able to reduce mortality rates and complications of care.

Among 260 hospitals participating in the HQID project (qualitydemo.com), Memorial Hospital Pembroke's "top-performer" designation ranks it among the top 20 percent of hospitals in the nation that have achieved highly reliable routine care in targeted medical conditions.

"This recognition is a testament of the commitment to quality care and the culture of safety that our entire administrative and medical team embraces and provides our patients on a daily basis," said Memorial Hospital Pembroke Administrator Martha Garcia.

Memorial Healthcare System President/CEO Frank V. Sacco urged attendees to empower their medical staffs and clinical personnel to become engaged and inspired in providing top quality care.

"If you make decisions with the patient in mind, you will start to develop an environment of safety and quality," Sacco said. "You have to empower your staff to make decisions. That is what is going to change the culture of American healthcare."

Nicole Auffret, RN, MS, LHRM, CPHQ, director of quality and patient safety, and the person responsible on a daily basis for the HQID project, agreed: "Quality is not just a job for the quality and risk departments. Achieving results requires will at all levels, but especially the will of top leadership. Hospital leaders play an essential role in ensuring the quality and safety of care for patients."

But, she noted, the will must be backed up by a good implementation plan. Her keys to success include:

- ▶ Use trained staff who know the indicators to do concurrent review, and hold reviewers accountable for the indicators being met.
- ▶ Hold leadership and staff accountable.
- ▶ Investigate variances and “near misses” fully and implement changes from what is learned quickly.
- ▶ Meet weekly.
- ▶ Never take your eye off the ball.
- ▶ Lead by making others powerful. Remember, the conductor of an orchestra doesn’t make a sound.

Auffret’s unit took over the HQID project in March 2006; it formerly shared the responsibility with case management. “Two years ago, we had quite a few retro cases,” she noted. “Now with all of the changes, we rarely have a case that’s not concurrent.

“The goal when we took over was no variances, and it is still our top priority. If we are going to do this, we are going to do it right,” Auffret said.

The no-nonsense leader did not want her department to be the sole HQID owner. “Responsibility must be shared to get the results we set our mind on,” she said. “As we

got more familiar with the needs and issues, we invited more and more disciplines to the evidence based medicine (EBM) meetings because we needed a team approach.”

Another key to success is the intense analysis of any variance including near misses that do not become variances because of timely quality staff intervention. Staff informs Auffret immediately of any potential variance. Unit leaders are made aware of variances immediately as well and asked to investigate and speak with the involved staff. The following week they present what happened and why at the EBM meeting. A variance may involve several departments, for instance pharmacy, nursing, ED and quality.

“We try to determine what failed in the process and put measures in place immediately to avoid another fall out,” Auffret explained. For example, this year she initiated an influenza screening campaign three weeks earlier based on a variance from the past year when a patient was admitted in early September and not discharged until October. That patient was not screened and did not receive the vaccine.

“I am happy to report that we have had no issues with influenza vaccines this year,” Auffret noted with pride.

Three quality management specialists carry out concurrent abstraction and intervention of the targeted conditions. They also helped to develop tools to assist with making successful changes while a patient was still in the hospital.

The multidisciplinary EBM team meets weekly. “We problem solve, we create or improve upon existing processes, and we analyze any variances or near misses.”

There was also a concerted effort to educate the medical and nursing staff. “We made HQID classes mandatory for all nurses and they continue on a bimonthly basis for nursing orientation and remediation,” Auffret said.

Medical directors of emergency department, surgery, anesthesia and medicine became physician champions. These physicians took ownership of these initiatives and educated their staffs one-on-one and at their own department meetings,” she said.

Auffret was quick to praise the work of her staff. “Having the right staff is very important; my staff is dedicated, assertive and passionate about what they do and all share my high goals and drive for success.”

▶ About Memorial Hospital Pembroke

Memorial Hospital Pembroke’s experienced medical professionals deliver personalized, advanced care. In addition to general medical and surgical services, Memorial Hospital Pembroke features a cardiac care unit, an emergency department, a hospice unit, an intensive care unit, an outpatient department and a respiratory special care unit. The hospital also features a Memory Center, Sleep Disorders Center and Wound Healing Center. This 301-bed facility is centrally located in South Broward County and has been operated by Memorial Healthcare System since 1995. For more information, visit www.mhs.net.



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