Case Study

Title: ControlTex® TMS® and Linen Awareness Supports Reduction in Pounds per Adjusted Patient Day

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BACKGROUND

A non-profit, 838-bed Medical Center with approximately 6000 employees is made up of four hospitals. The Medical Center is home to one of the top heart programs in the United States; the only kidney transplant center in the state; the highest level trauma center; and the only freestanding children’s hospital in the state.

OBJECTIVE

The Medical Center has an on-premise laundry that processes linen for its own health system in addition to other medical facilities. In late 2010, administration decided to make some management changes. An internal employee was promoted to Operations Manager of the laundry, due in part to his experience with linen purchasing and the linen committee. He was eager to make improvements within the laundry and the linen systems they serviced, and he partnered with Standard Textile to explore opportunities to improve performance and reduce cost. During 2010, key performance indicators for pounds per adjusted patient day had been steadily increasing, and one of his goals was to drive reduction in this key metric. Laundry Management decided to focus efforts to reduce pounds of linen used per adjusted patient day.

STRATEGY

As the laundry managers grew acclimated to their new positions, initial meetings with Textile Management Consultants focused on training for ControlTex® TMS® software in use at the laundry. With this new knowledge about the textile management system and its capabilities, The Operations Manager and his team decided to use ControlTex reports to support their initiative to reduce pounds per adjusted patient day. The laundry management team decided to use the ControlTex Stock Level Report by Cart to evaluate current standards for possible adjustments due to changes in usage patterns. Additionally, he wanted to schedule a “Linen Awareness Day” at the four main facilities to educate patient care staff about proper linen utilization and its cost impact.
ControlTex® TMS Reports
When he started his new position, he made a point to visit units throughout the Medical Center to observe their linen practices and procedures. He noticed many units had an abundance of certain items on the linen cart, and felt there may be an opportunity to adjust linen cart standards. The ControlTex Stock Level Report by Cart is an effective tool to monitor and adjust standards, as it calculates average daily item use over a selected time period and compares this consumption to the current daily standard. The report also calculates a recommended standard based on utilization plus a variable percentage that can be entered. When he ran a Stock Level Report by Cart, his suspicions were confirmed. Many units had significantly higher daily cart standards than were necessary. He used the report to establish a revised set of cart standards for the main facilities. He took the new cart standard to each unit and met with the nurse manager to review and approve the changes. Once there was buy-in from nurse management, cart standards were changed and stocked accordingly.

Linen Awareness
The Operations Manager wanted to incorporate a Linen Awareness Program throughout the healthcare system. The program included a day at each of the main facilities to conduct a presentation to each unit. The presentation focused on best practices for linen utilization with patient care staff, with an emphasis on communicating methods to reduce pounds per adjusted patient day. Staff was told about the changes in cart standards based on good ControlTex data, the “linen reclamation bag” procedure for stained or torn linen, and ways to prevent unnecessary linen processing (e.g. avoid excess linen in patient rooms, change thermal spreads “as needed.”) Additionally, actual samples of damaged linen from the hospital were passed around to staff so they could see an example. During the presentation each participant was able to take a brochure with a detachable quiz, which could be entered in a drawing for gift certificates. The Operations Manager and consultants from Standard Textile facilitated the presentations, and took the opportunity to solicit feedback from patient care staff about any concerns they had. Ultimately, the linen awareness program was very well received and created a forum for dialogue between the laundry management team and the departments they serviced.

RESULTS
Pounds per Adjusted Patient Day is an excellent key performance indicator as it takes into account all linen consuming activities within the health care system (i.e. same-day surgery, outpatient clinics). This measurement accurately reflects pounds per “event” within the hospital, and the metric was chosen by the Operations Manager due to the Medical Center’s significant outpatient activity. In 2011, the Medical Center experienced a reduction of .51 lb. per adjusted patient day, a drop of approximately 3.5% that places the facility below the national average. The following chart demonstrates the reduction in poundage per adjusted patient day over the past year.
The savings achieved in 2011 amounts to over $25,000. The following calculation provides an explanation of this savings:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Lbs. / APD</th>
<th>Reduction</th>
<th>X APD 2011</th>
<th>= Poundage Savings</th>
<th>Variable Processing Cost Savings @ $.15 / lb.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2010</td>
<td>15.03</td>
<td>0.51 lbs./APD</td>
<td>328,776</td>
<td>167,675</td>
<td>$25,151</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2011</td>
<td>14.52</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
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**CONCLUSION**

During their first year, the new laundry management team at the Medical Center has worked hard to manage the transition and continue to improve the laundry and linen services operation for the Medical Center. The Operations Manager and his team wanted to improve utilization metrics on an adjusted patient day basis, and they connected with consultants from Standard Textile to take advantage of value-added services. Using ControlTex to gather accurate data and generating Stock Level Reports allowed the laundry to modify and decrease linen cart standards for a number of units. This initiative indirectly helped to “free up” some linen inventory and also reduced staff’s ability to hoard excess linen or take it into rooms. By thoroughly communicating the cart standard changes and other linen management best practices to staff, he was able to emphasize procedures that undoubtedly served to reduce the Medical Center’s pounds per adjusted patient day. Combined, these activities made a positive impact on patient-care staff relations for the new laundry managers, and helped them achieve their goal to reduce pounds per adjusted patient day. By using the ControlTex linen management software reports for decision support, conducting linen awareness presentations, and a commitment continuous improvement, the laundry management team at the Medical Center will flourish in their new role.