Case Study

Title: Optimizing Linen Utilization for a Group of Hospitals

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BACKGROUND

A healthcare network in the Central region offers a fully integrated supply chain solution to its member hospitals. The study is based on sixteen of the hospitals in the group, representing 3,475 licensed beds in four states. During the past two years, Standard Textile has actively partnered with the facilities working on various initiatives to reduce overall pounds utilized per patient day.

OBJECTIVE

The objective was to reduce linen utilization per adjusted patient day in each facility, closing the gap between their current performance in this category and the national best demonstrated practices. Secondarily, the network wanted to begin standardization of policies and procedures throughout the system.

STRATEGY

Teams were developed at each facility and began working with Standard Textile’s Consultative Services division with an initial focus on developing a better understanding of the linen utilization activities within each of the facilities, and the opportunities to improve service and utilization practices. The early initiatives focused on the following activities:

1. Installation and effectively utilizing the ControlTex® linen management system.

2. Conducted comprehensive facility assessments of each phase of the linen system that included surveys, observations, and interviews with linen distribution and nursing staff to obtain reactions on the quality of linen service and products, indentifying cost savings and service opportunities to maximize efficiency of linen system resources.
3. Conducted clean linen discharge audits to determine quantities of excess clean linen in patient rooms at the time of discharge and the associated cost savings opportunities.

4. Developed linen management teams – a resource and forum to review and discuss pertinent linen issues and open lines of communication between nursing and linen services.

5. Assembled key performance indicator data that included clean poundage, patient days, adjusted patient days, linen replacement cost, and laundry processing cost to establish key baseline performance benchmarks.

6. Monthly monitoring of linen usage, adjusting par levels based on usage trends and departmental needs.

Facility assessment reports containing benchmark comparisons, department interview findings, process improvement recommendations and cost saving opportunities were developed and presented to each of the facilities and the system linen utilization team. Following a review and input from the linen committees, numerous linen management techniques and best practices were implemented. While striving for system-wide standardization, individual plans were tweaked in some instances based on the hospital’s culture. The next set of initiatives to be implemented included:

1. Revision or development and implementation of policies and procedures for bed change and make-up, and scrub utilization and control.

2. Reduction of linen loss by focusing on improved practices with linen used by ambulance crews and during patient transfers.

3. Developed continuous linen education programs by creating a linen awareness process through linen awareness days, inservices, linen rounds by linen management personnel, and a tip of the month program reinforcing good linen management practices.

4. Distribution of monthly linen utilization reports delivered to unit managers which included the Distribution Point Usage Summary Report, the Monthly Summary Report and the Stock Level Report by Cart / Closet.

5. Consistent par level adjustments based on usage trends and departmental needs.
RESULTS

Several initiatives have been implemented during the partnership with varying degrees of success among the different facilities. The desire to create and perpetuate an effective linen system was continually communicated by actions taken and information shared by all in the group. The teams achieved the following results:

Pounds Per Adjusted Patient Day Decreased from 9.84 to 9.15. Cost Savings Achieved: $511,758, a 7% reduction.

![POUNDS PER PATIENT DAY](image)

The teams’ achievements are significant in that their baseline pounds per adjusted patient day benchmark was already below the national benchmark of 14.22 pounds per adjusted patient day.

Armed with information, effective linen decisions were made and principal processes improved. Accurate linen stocking levels were established, monitored and adjusted on an ongoing basis. Areas with high loss items were identified and addressed. Policies and procedures were standardized. Overall, confidence in the linen system was also increased.