

Vila Health: Patient Flow

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Introduction

Patients' satisfaction is a significant index in the healthcare system, as it indicates quality services delivered and impacts the success and popularity of healthcare centers (Batbaatar et al., 2017). In a recent survey conducted at Vila Health, the level of satisfaction among the patients has greatly reduced from 93% to 79% within the last eight months. The issues that have resulted in this decline include poor communication with patients and long appointment waiting times. This paper intends to discuss these challenges, identify the possible causes, and suggest a strategic plan to improve patient satisfaction using the performance improvement activities, Lean Methodology, and Define, Measure, Analyze, Improve and Control (DMAIC) model.

Importance of Patient Satisfaction

Competitive Advantage

In the healthcare industry, patient satisfaction remains a strategic competitive factor in service provision. Satisfied consumers not only remain loyal customers to the healthcare service provider but also recommend the organization to other patients (Asnawi et al., 2019). To Vila Health, patient satisfaction is one of the key competitive advantage areas that can help the organization retain its market position in the region, especially because prospective clients rely on online ratings and reviews.

Strategic Initiatives

The key activities of Vila Health's strategic plan involve offering excellent health services and enhancing patients' satisfaction. These include staff development, improving the hospitals' physical surroundings, and improving operational efficiency. However, the current decreased satisfaction level, especially in communication and waiting time, may call for a more strategic solution that captures these disparities (Lee et al., 2020).

Patient Satisfaction as a Strategy

Positive patient satisfaction is significant in Vila Health, reflecting patient loyalty and healthy outcomes. When patients are satisfied, they are more encouraged to follow the advice they are given, follow up, and refer others to the health facility. Hence, increasing patient satisfaction is consistent with the organization's mission of delivering quality care and its business strategy (Asnawi et al., 2019).

Performance Improvement Initiative

Rationale for Selection

Regaining patient satisfaction is important not only to uphold the hospital's image but also to improve functioning and financial sustainability. Negative experiences may decrease patient flow and increase turnover, as well as contribute to patients suing healthcare organizations. Therefore, improving these areas is an effective and strategic direction.

Potential Causes for Decline

According to the survey, the major concern is communication and wait time, where the satisfaction rates are 65% and 49%, respectively. In particular, 47% of the dissatisfied patients and 38% of the clients sought treatment in other departments, whilst 15% were parents accompanying their children in pediatric wards. These numbers indicate inefficiencies in the movement of patients as well as staff and patient relations as a system that requires to be resolved.

Performance Improvement Initiative definition

A performance improvement initiative systematically defines gaps and solves healthcare services' problems. It entails establishing specific objectives, undertaking timely and specific action, and systematically evaluating the results to improve consumers' health status and experience (Kaminski et al., 2017).

The Purpose and Roles in a Performance Improvement Team

Purpose

The role of a performance improvement team is to develop a plan to solve problems related to patient satisfaction and organizational functionality. Their responsibilities include promoting awareness of the causes, designing and implementing solutions, and assessing the impact of these interventions.

Roles and Stakeholders

A comprehensive performance improvement team should include:

- **Project Manager:** To be directly responsible for managing and coordinating the project or the individual activities.
- **Healthcare Professionals:** Generate data from different operational management levels, such as doctors, nurses, and administrative personnel.
- **Quality Assurance Specialists:** To emphasize compliance and standards.
- **Patient Representatives:** To advocate for the patients' needs and ensure that improvements are directed at their needs.

The engagement of the stakeholders in the development of the solutions is crucial as it would encompass all aspects of the patient's needs.

Lean Methodology

Definition and Application

Lean methodology involves identifying and eradicating non-value activities while enhancing them. It is particularly useful in healthcare centers where facilities are scarce while patients are many. Lean has a direct impact on patient satisfaction since it focuses on eliminating non-value-added activities and enhancing patient throughput (Antony et al., 2019).

Applicable Projects

Lean Methodology can be applied to projects in Vila Health, such as reorganizing the patient admission process, scheduling staff, and changing communication between staff and patients.

DMAIC Model Application

Define the Problem

Vila Health has developed an issue involving a decrease in patient satisfaction, mainly concerning communication and time. This problem is common in the ER, which treats 73% of the admissions, and most often occurs between 6 p.m. and 4 a.m.

Measure and Analyze

Some key data sources include patient response questionnaires, wait time records, staff interaction observation, and quantitative process analysis. These analyses will help determine, among other things, where exactly a certain procedure is lacking or if the department is poorly staffed.

Root Cause Analysis

The likely root causes might be a lack of staffing during rush hours, poor communication skills, and organizational practices that hinder patient care. Solving these concerns entails developing technical skills, reorganizing procedures, and hiring more caregivers.

Improvement Recommendations

Proposed measures include establishing a system to distinguish patients based on severity, working on better staff scheduling to cover many patients during certain hours, and holding staff meetings on how to communicate better with each other. Also, using technology to handle some procedures can help eliminate long waiting hours (Ponsiglione et al., 2021).

Control Measures

Greater attention should be paid to averting regression in order to guarantee sustained improvement. This may be achieved through strict monitoring and evaluation processes at Vila Health. Such feedback could entail patient satisfaction feedback, process assessment, and constant staff feedback that would help identify new areas of non-compliance over a given period (Lee et al., 2021).

Conclusion

In this case, maximizing patient satisfaction in Vila Health is a complex process involving performance improvement approaches, Lean Methodology, and the DMAIC model. Thus, by identifying and targeting key sources of dissatisfaction, mainly in terms of communication and waiting time, Vila Health can improve patient experiences, sustain market differentiation, and achieve its founding vision of delivering outstanding care. If the proposed solutions are to be utilized optimally, they will enhance patient satisfaction and make the process more efficient and the healthcare outcomes better.

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