

The Daily/Weekly Huddle: UNC Health Care

March 28 – April 1, 2011

High Volumes and Stresses on the System

Monday	High Volumes
Tuesday	North Carolina's "safety-net hospital"
Wednesday	What can clinical departments do?
Thursday	What can non-clinical departments do?
Friday	Plans for growth

Thought of the Week

Have you noticed that our hospital is getting busier? This week we'll look at some of the reasons why and discuss how we can best handle the increased volumes.

Action of the Week

Think about the ways increased volume may be affecting patients show empathy and concern for their needs, even when your workday is getting busier.

Praised Performer of the Week – From e-High 5

A huge High 5 to Ellenita Fowler (Transport Nurse) for all her help on 3 West, when they were busy and two patients needing stat CTs and MRIs and were transferred to the unit. Ellenita came to the rescue!

Quote of the Week

Don't be afraid to give your best to what seemingly are small jobs. If you do the little jobs well, the big ones will tend to take care of themselves. ~ Dale Carnegie

Monday

High volumes

Have you noticed that we are getting busier in recent weeks? We have seen inpatient occupancy rise as high as 96%, with some services lines at 100% occupancy. Recently the emergency department cared for 258 patients in a single day – that is 40% higher than their usual volume. Many of our clinics continue to see rising patient volumes. These high volumes can cause extra stresses for departments and individuals, as more patients can cause longer waits and delays and even cancellations or rescheduling of services.

Question for Discussion

How have the higher patient volumes impacted our department/unit/clinic?

Tuesday

North Carolina's "safety-net hospital"

When people are sick and cannot afford to pay (or fully pay) for their care, it is our responsibility as the state hospital to take care of them. When the economy is in a recession, as it is now, we expect that we will be called upon to help more

people. We are very busy, and that sometimes causes delays and frustration from our patients and colleagues. Thank you for everything you do each day to deal with the stresses brought on by current situation.

Question for Discussion

What changes have you seen in your daily work because of the higher volumes?

Wednesday

What can clinical departments do?

With the current surge in demand, we must be sensitive to patients who may wait longer than expected or experience a cancelation of admission or surgery due to lack of bed availability. Showing empathy to our patients by always using Words and Ways that Work conveys our concern for their experience. It also reminds patients that we consider it a privilege to care for them.

Question for Discussion

How can we “manage up” or set positive expectations for our patients about a situation where a delay in our processes may have occurred?

Thursday

What can non-clinical departments do?

When there is surge demand, it is even more important to be responsive and attentive to our patients, families and colleagues. A surge in demand flexes our processes and systems beyond their capabilities — which many times result in delays and added stress for our patients, their families and our colleagues.

Question for Discussion

How can our group better support our patients, their families and our provider/non-provider colleagues — especially in times of surge demand?

Friday

Plans for growth

UNC Health Care continues to grow and plan for further expansion to meet the needs of the people of North Carolina. This spring a new 15-bed Wound Unit will open adjacent to the Burn Center and our Neonatal Critical Care Center will add 10 additional bassinets. Within the next two years we plan to open a new 24-bed unit on 7 Neuroscience and a 27-bed unit on 3 Bed Tower. Of course, the highlight of 2015 will be the opening of our 68-bed Hillsborough Hospital.

Question for Discussion

How could these growth plans impact our department/unit/clinic?