

Hospital Name:

Regional Medical Center –
Memphis

Address:

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Memphis, TN 38103
(901) 545-7100

Contact:

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2007 YTD ED Volume: 29,945
Growth from 2005: -6%
Total Staffed Hospital Beds: 347
Acute ED Beds: 14
Fast Track: Yes
Clinical Decision Unit: No

Problem to be Resolved:

Overcrowding in ED

Key Words:

- Discharge
- Length of stay
- Throughput

Lessons Learned:

Initially staff at The MED was concerned because patients felt like they were being kicked out of the ED when they were transported to the DRR; this was addressed by maintaining adequate communication about the process with the patients.

Reason for Change:

The ED at the Regional Medical Center of Memphis (The MED) faced serious overcrowding. The main causes of this overcrowding were found to be patients staying in the ED after being discharged and patients returning to the ED after discharge because of failure to properly follow discharge instructions, including proper use of medications. A team from the ED set out to find solutions to these problems, in hopes that they could ease the ED's overcrowding.

Implementation:

The MED created a Discharge Resource Room (DRR) to address the problem of patients remaining in the ED after being discharged. Once the physician orders the discharge of a patient, that patient is transported to the DRR. At the same time, any prescriptions for the patient are filled at the outpatient pharmacy. Once the patient arrives at the DRR, the DRR nurse reinforces any discharge instructions, including proper use of prescribed medications. The DRR nurse also helped arrange transport for the patient from the facility. A few days later, the DRR nurse places a follow-up call to the patient, to make sure that he or she is continuing with proper care.

The ED staff had trouble getting support from hospital management initially. However, once the results of this new process could be seen, management offered both support and funding. It was clear that the DRR was a valuable asset to the ED, as it helped improve patient care and add to the overall patient experience.

Results/Impact:

The addition of a Discharge Resource Room at The MED was effective at decreasing the occurrence of non-emergency return visits to the ED. Additionally, patient satisfaction increased, as a result of better care and shorter length of stay.