

Hospital Name:

Lenoir Memorial Hospital

Address:

100 Airport Road
Kinston, NC 28501

Contact:

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2005 YTD ED Volume: 40,322
Growth from 2004: unknown
Total Staffed Hospital Beds: 261
Acute ED Beds: 23
Fast Track: Yes
Clinical Decision Unit: No

Problem to be Resolved:

Increased crowding in ED due to overuse for minor illnesses and injuries

Key Words:

- Patient education
- Primary care physician
- Admitted ED patients

Lessons Learned:

Lenoir realized that they must be careful in their advertising not to completely drive patients away from their facility. Advertisements were supplemented with detailed articles in Lenoir's regular newsletter, so that the community was thoroughly educated on the topic of appropriate ED use.

Expanding capacity does not necessarily mean new construction projects or substantial investments. Lenoir found that with the help of remote monitoring technology, it could make use of unused physical capital that the hospital already

Reason for Change:

Staff at Lenoir Memorial Hospital realized that something needed to be done to address the issue of overcrowding at their ED, a problem made worse by the fact that many people in the community were visiting the ED for their primary care needs.

Implementation:

Lenoir Memorial Hospital began an aggressive advertising campaign to encourage individuals to visit their primary care physician for minor illnesses and injuries rather than the ED. This campaign did not tell people not to go to the ED, but rather educated them on what sort of situations actually warranted a trip to the ED, and what could be handled elsewhere.

Additionally, Lenoir added a new medical unit to remotely monitor admitted ED patients who would otherwise be boarded in the ED until an inpatient bed becomes available. This unit made use of existing beds that were originally licensed for long-term care, but that were not currently being used. New licensing was obtained so that this unit could be used to monitor admitted patients. Now Lenoir does not board patients in the ED, which means that the ED is able to accept more emergency patients in a timely manner.

Results/Impact:

Although numerical data is not available, Lenoir has recognized that since these changes were put in place, the ED is not overcrowded and they never need to board admitted patients in the ED.