THROUGHPUT SOLUTIONS

Improving LOS and Resolving Barriers to Patient Flow

HIGHLIGHTS

- Analyze opportunity based on severity adjusted length of stay data, including internal and external benchmarks
- Develop hospital-wide infrastructure and governance for effectively managing patient flow and care delivery; create a governance process to oversee LOS improvement effort, including synchronization with Utilization Review Committee
- Educate and mentor the care team in driving progression of care in order to optimize the hospital stay and patient outcome
- Implement a comprehensive delay program to identify clinical process improvement opportunities that eliminate delays in care progression and decrease overall hospital length of stay
- Develop a data governance process that oversees the creation of Key Performance Indicators and dashboards and enables accountability for groups and individuals
- Align nurses, case management, and physicians around care coordination functions
- Engage physicians, particularly hospitalists, in implementing LOS best practices, including handoffs, geographic assignments, and multidisciplinary rounding
- Develop and implement Management Action Plans that prioritize interventions, including redesign of admission, rounding, and discharge processes, implementation of evidence-based order sets, and use of transfer criteria

As reimbursement for hospitals declines due to penalties for poor outcomes (e.g., readmissions and hospital acquired conditions), the increased use of observation, and payment recovery audits, pressure mounts to increase the efficiency of the clinical enterprise. At the same time, the Affordable Care Act sets into motion a growing momentum for a greater percentage of hospital revenues to derive from alternative payment methodologies, such as shared savings within Accountable Care Organization (ACO) arrangements. These alternative payment methodologies further incentivize hospitals to improve their clinical efficiency and reduce patient length of stay (LOS).

FTI CONSULTING’S APPROACH

Our experienced, multidisciplinary team detects and captures the clinical and financial opportunities which often lie hidden within your organization by identifying inefficiencies in care processes, quantifying clinical opportunity, and deploying a team with strong operational experience to address the root causes.

FTI conducts an external benchmark analysis to provide a relative opportunity estimate based on top performers in numerous categories, including local, state, national, and other custom peer groups. FTI also performs internal benchmark analyses that help organizations to identify the internal variation, which can serve as a powerful lever for change. The internal analysis helps physicians to recognize when their colleagues are achieving higher performances within the same system, under the same financial and resource constraints, and with the same “inefficiencies”. For those physicians who believe that “their patients are sicker or more complicated”, the data is severity adjusted in very discrete ways. Additionally, quantifying LOS opportunity as a dollar-value based on the likely reduction in costs directly connects LOS management to the bottom line, serving as a strong influence for clinicians and administrators alike.

The ultimate goal is to achieve integrated processes that significantly improve quality patient care and financial performance by systematically and accurately coordinating every aspect of a patient’s progression through the continuum of care from pre-admission to post-hospital care. The level of efficiency and effectiveness of quality care delivery has direct financial and customer service implications for the organization. This is demonstrated in optimized net revenue realization, improved cash flow, and reduced expenses. In addition, improving care delivery has a significant effect on customer, staff, and physician satisfaction.

RECENT CLIENT EXPERIENCE

Southcoast Health Systems

Southcoast achieved a 0.7 day reduction in LOS from baseline over a one year period of interventions resulting in a $3.2 million annual expense reduction.

“FTI was very instrumental in helping to define and support the key initiatives that we needed to implement to improve our LOS. They specifically helped us work with our hospitalists and other physicians to institute daily multidisciplinary rounds, improve a geographic rounding process, and develop greater accountability through sharing of data on individual and group performance.”
WE DELIVER RESULTS

The FTI Consulting team has the experience and dedication necessary to assist your organization in achieving improved bottom-line performance through the assessment and implementation of length of stay management solutions. We collaborate with our clients to design organizational processes and controls that promote efficient flow and quality patient care. We are meticulous in confirming that these processes meet regulatory guidelines and maximize clinical revenue potential by providing sound medically necessary care at the right time and in the appropriate setting. Our efforts help clients improve financial results and outcomes through the implementation of best practices:

• LOS Oversight – Utilization Review (UR) Committee or LOS Steering Committee: This Committee provides the structure for prioritizing and coordinating LOS initiatives. The Committee establishes LOS targets for the organization and monitors performance against those benchmarks. This Committee also develops a process by which outlier departments, physician groups, or physicians can be identified and held accountable for performance.

• Multi-Disciplinary Rounds (MDRs): The MDRs bring together the physician, nurse, and case manager triad on a daily basis to collaborate on the progression of care of individual patients. This best practice ensures that the key team members are in sync about the care process and can quickly identify barriers to care coordination.

• Long LOS Case Review: A group of clinical and administrative leaders, including representatives from medicine, nursing, finance, social work, and case management, meet regularly to review the individual cases that meet an established threshold for long LOS. This review enables the effective identification and management of barriers to discharge for complex patients.

• Proactively Targeting Discharge Dates - Anticipated Date of Discharge (ADOD): Organizations assign an anticipated discharge date based on primary diagnosis in the initial days of each patient’s stay. This approach provides the care team with an evidence-based target and the opportunity to make early adjustments should the care team encounter any challenges in achieving the target.

• Discharge Appointments: Establishing and communicating an anticipated discharge date to the patient and their family involves these key individuals in the discharge planning process. This approach is intended to prevent patient/family-related delays in discharge and preempts the oft-stated concern of “family not available to take patient home”.

• Discharge Checklist: The creation of a flowsheet listing essential steps to be completed prior to discharge serves as a decision aid for the care team that promotes the timely management of each step in the process. Checklists have been proven to aid clinical flow in numerous areas, but have not consistently been applied in the discharge process.

• Comprehensive Delay Days Program: By developing a process that identifies delays in care delivery, responsibility can be attributed to the appropriate group, individual, or process. Root cause analysis can be performed to identify systemic issues, and process improvement can then be undertaken. Overall delays are reported through the UR/LOS Committee to establish physician support and provide data for administrative decisions.

ABOUT THE FTI TEAM

The FTI Throughput Solutions Team is led by subject matter experts who have experience in all of the operational and functional areas of a health system, including physician and hospital operations, change and transformation management, technology, customer experience, analytics and performance management, continuous quality improvement, and project management assessment and implementation. Health Solutions is a division of FTI Consulting, Inc., an organization of 3,800+ consultants in 24 countries.