

# Case Management

## Problem

Meridian identified that the Department of Case Management of a client hospital was struggling with high costs due to denied days and long lengths of stay. In addition, case managers were overextended and under-performing. It became clear that a reorganization of the department was needed to ensure effective communication, smooth transitions of care, and better define roles.

## Solutions

### Interdisciplinary Rounds

Meridian introduced the concept of a collaborative approach to patient care by integrating case managers and discharge planners into care team rounds.

Providers are now offered prioritized tasks by the Case Management Team who participate as an integral part of the care team.

### Flow Charts

Meridian documented existing workflows and created an organizational chart for the department. This highlighted areas of inefficiency and presented an opportunity to reorganize the department.

### Team Model

Meridian assisted the Director of Case Management in developing an integrated care team model for the department consisting of case managers, discharge planners, and ancillary staff.

The team now meets daily to prioritize work assignments, collaborate on the care plan, and identify barriers to discharge earlier in the course of a hospital stay.

### Training Materials

Meridian worked with the Director of Case Management to develop standardized training and resource materials enabling staff to function in a consistent manner and at the highest level of their licensure.

Individuals are now able to work more effectively and cross-cover when necessary.

### Hiring of Staff

Meridian managed a complex negotiation between Human Resources, the hospital's County Board of Supervisors, and the Nurses Union to accomplish the hiring of discharge planners.

This effort paved the way for an interdisciplinary care team and a functional collaborative care model.

### Workspace Relocation

Meridian applied Lean Six Sigma methodologies and conducted a workspace flow analysis, resulting in the relocation of the department of Case Management.

The outcome was improved productivity, morale, communication, accountability, and teamwork.

### Accountability

Meridian implemented a utilization review tracking board for the hospital. The Case Management Team now sends status updates to the board to quickly notify Nursing of a pending discharge.

This results in earlier discharges, improved new patient access, and increased patient satisfaction.

### Financial Analysis

Meridian performed a cost analysis including losses due to denied days, administrative days, prolonged lengths of stay, and allocation of resources.

The analysis proved an overall cost savings opportunity through reorganization, justifying the cost of hiring additional discharge planners.



## Results

Through collaboration and trust, Meridian was able to develop a successful Case Management model that will be sustainable over time and is flexible to meet the needs of patients in an evolving healthcare environment.