

Improving the Admission Process – Improved AR, Decreased Claims Rejection, Significantly Improved Staff and Patient Satisfaction



Rio Grande Hospital is a Critical Access Hospital with 17 licensed beds, a Level 4 trauma designation, a 5-bed ER, full-service lab, orthopedics, physical therapy, radiology, respiratory therapy and surgery services. In addition, it includes four Clinics located in Creede, Del Norte, Monte Vista and South Fork. It is part of Valley Citizens' Foundation for Healthcare, Inc., a community nonprofit organization whose mission is to provide health care to the Western San Luis Valley.

Arlene Harms commented, "She had previously been involved with Lean Six Sigma projects, the engagement with SigmaMed would be the first presented to the staff at Rio Grande Hospital. There was need to address a significant problem with the Admissions process. This problem not only impacted our revenue position but caused a tremendous amount of frustration and staff dissatisfaction."

The Problem

Identified a significant problem with the Admissions Process –

- Measured 500 Errors per 1000 Admissions

The errors ranged from Incorrect Insurance Numbers to Incorrect Contact Information. This added a significant amount of waste in money and time in first identifying the error and then fixing it prior to being submitted for reimbursement.

The Lean Six Sigma Healthcare Solution

Rio Grande Hospital & Clinics had identified a major problem with their Processes. Like the majority of healthcare organizations, this was a major problem that needed to be addressed but not quite sure how to fix it quickly and efficiently. They also realized that throwing money at a problem would not necessarily fix the core issues. After engaging SigmaMed, one thing becomes very apparent through SigmaMed's Lean Six Sigma Healthcare Solution, it's not the People, it's the Process and automating bad processes will not address the core issues.

SigmaMed's efforts are in providing on-going project management mentorship, training and tools for addressing their broken process, small or big, Financial or Clinical. The goal is to ensure that the staff has the core knowledge for using a reproducible process for addressing the majority of business issues they face in a short timeframe. It is also about having the internal Process in place to address the changing landscapes in healthcare like ICD-10, Quality Reporting, PCMH Certification, Value-Based Purchasing, etc.

Arlene Harms went on to say, "The benefits we have seen have gone beyond this initial project. It has affected the way team members were eager to start on the second Lean Six SigmaMed Healthcare project. I can tell you their enthusiasm has translated into an increase in openness among hospital staff for improvement initiatives in general."

About SigmaMed Solutions

SigmaMed Solutions is a Lean Six Sigma professional services firm with decades of experience in healthcare quality, process improvement and enterprise EHR project management. We are committed to helping healthcare providers and facilities cost effectively implement Lean Six Sigma process improvements to drive efficiency and effectiveness methodologies. We are dedicated to serving our clients in a "Lean" manner and all our work is guaranteed.

Outcomes Achieved

With 3 Months brought the error rate down from 500 to less than 5 per 1000.

- Improved Patient Satisfaction and Safety
- Improved Staff Satisfaction
- Improved AR
- Reduced Claims Rejection

The organization has also seen a very positive culture shift in the way the team members address issue they face in their day to day work.