



Kid-Friendly Processes Improve Oncology Patient Care



Problem

Antiquated processes increased overhead costs and pediatric patient stress

Solution

Alacer restructured internal processes to be more kid- and family-friendly and developed a case manager model to help the hospital meet the regional health care provider's system-wide standards

Results

Reduced intake process by 76 minutes, discharge process by 29 minutes, patient fear by 14%, with annual savings of \$321,000

Overview

A regional health care provider acquired a 253-bed acute care hospital with outdated, costly intake and discharge processes in its pediatric oncology unit that severely impacted the quality of patient care. Not only did it want to bring the newly acquired facility up to high network standards, it wanted to eliminate stress for families and young patients. To achieve these goals and to help lower overhead costs, Alacer needed to overhaul the hospital's workflow and operational directions.

Challenges

Alacer faced two pressing problems: how to bring the hospital into regulatory and standards compliance, and how to mitigate the trauma of young patients experiencing cancer treatment. Its solution needed to not only comply with internal procedures but also with those of regulatory bodies such as the Joint Commission and the American Medical Association.

Alacer extensively evaluated current systems and processes, observing patients and their families visiting three different locations and nursing stations before beginning treatment in an outdated intake process. The child's introduction to the treatment environment was conducted by a nurse already tasked with a full workload.

Results

Alacer recommended creating a single intake desk and a case manager model consistent with the health care provider's other pediatric units. Each child would be assigned a single point of contact responsible for streamlining procedures and ensuring consistency of care. Forms were simplified, paperwork was reduced. A child life specialist was appointed to lead patient tours and to explain procedures to the family.

With a reorganized workflow and a new set of critical operating guidelines, the hospital significantly reduced patient intake and discharge time requirements and lowered annual administration expenses by more than \$300,000. Additionally, the solution allowed better staff utilization while more successfully meeting the emotional needs of its patients; a survey found the fear factor for incoming patients was reduced by 14%.

