

Major Medical Care Delivery Organization initiates a systematic measurement and quality review process to improve Quality of care and dramatic financial improvement.

BACKGROUND:

- In 2000 one of the most successful independent health-care providers in the US was faced with a challenging period. As a public company operating over 1000 small specialized clinics throughout the country, they had below average results and were struggling financially to survive.

PROCESS:

- New management team came on-board with a commitment to delivering above average quality and financial results
- Having highly specialized facilities, the positive relationship between offering high quality care with high financial return became apparent
- Over the next 7 years, quality measurements were put in place to track the behaviors which resulted in achieving desired outcomes
- Root causes were identified and gaps in performance were minimized

RESULTS:

Within 18 months the improvements were visible. Every facility began to see positive changes on four targeted measurements:

- Customer satisfaction ratings increased
- Selected patient medical statistics improved
- Adverse, unexpected medical consequences decreased significantly
- Overall financial performance of most clinics improved measurably

Within 3 years the company became the top performer in its industry. Experiencing a 300% increase in stock price as a consequence of these changes, it continues to consistently deliver better financial and medical results than any of its competitors.

CASE OVERVIEW:

The first part of that process was to study several facilities that had remarkably above average and below average performance, identifying the behaviors that seemed to be empirically linked to specific outcomes. This baseline process used quality measurement sampling to calibrate and identify root causes of desirable and undesirable outcomes.

Not surprisingly, all of the “best” facilities shared many of the same common practices. Similarly, many of underperforming facilities had many behaviors in common. Once these desired practices and

behaviors were identified they were systematically built into training programs as well as sustainable QA and feedback processes that were eventually installed in every facility.

These tools measured conformance with best practices on multiple dimensions and produced a chart that was posted visibly in each clinic. Clinics received prizes for making improvements on these charts. Based on the new metrics, facilities with a persistent below average performance had to undergo further measurement with more frequent feedback to both facility managers and individual care givers.

CONCLUSION:

Despite beliefs that there was little opportunity for positive change in such a mature and highly regulated industry, this company was able to achieve extraordinary results. The combination of having a clear leadership commitment with the development of a continuous performance measurement and feedback system gave them the competitive edge to re-establish themselves as a strong industry player.

FOR MORE INFORMATION:

For more information on this project or to discuss how this approach can work for other medical care providers, contact:

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