Children's Cancer Center as a Clinical Microsystem: Engagement

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A clinical microsystem is the smallest functional unit within the healthcare system and is composed of the patient, a provider, and information. The Children’s Cancer Center (CCC) outpatient clinic functions as a microsystem within the LVRC Health mesosystem and Lehigh Valley Health Network macrosystem. The main purpose of this project was to assess and identify areas for quality improvement in work engagement within the Children’s Cancer Center staff. Engagement requires an employee’s vigor, dedication and absorption. Prioritizing engagement can decrease employee turnover and burnout while increasing well-being, performance, productivity, and patient satisfaction. Assessment tools: - Staff interviews, including twelve questions about identifying the CCC’s purpose, staff morale, effectiveness of communication, etc. - Clinical Microsystem Assessment Tool and engagement surveys - Daily morning huddle surveys The themes found from initial assessment were streamlining communication, increasing morning huddle efficiency, providing continuing education tools, and fostering a supportive atmosphere. Countermeasures: - Restructure of morning huddle - Provided continuing education materials, or "mini projects" - Marbles corresponding to the staff's daily stress levels - Patient and peer-to-peer encouragement notes • Initial assessment: - The high level of engagement seen in the CCC could be due to working within a rewarding clinical microsystem with high patient satisfaction and appreciation. - The CCC engagement assessment showed opportunities for improvement through better support, including trauma, stewardship, staff training, more organized quality improvement, which includes the involvement of all staff. Countermeasures: - New huddle structure showed need for improvement in ensuring only pertinent information is reviewed. - Marbles as stress indicators showed less stressful shifts over time. Final assessment: - Repeated staff engagement survey with additional questions showed mixed results, which is likely due to lack of time from shifting culture. - Additional survey questions regarding countermeasures were very positive and suggest they will have a positive impact. - Responses showed more value in huddle after implementing the new structure. Limitations: - Some results in quality improvement can only be expressed qualitatively. - Results are dependent on multiple variables: patient volume, outcomes, external circumstances, etc. • The themes found from initial assessment were streamlining communication, increasing morning huddle efficiency, providing continuing education tools, and fostering a supportive atmosphere. Countermeasures: - Restructure of morning huddle - Provided continuing education materials, or "mini projects" - Marbles corresponding to the staff's daily stress levels - Patient and peer-to-peer encouragement notes • Initial assessment: - The high level of engagement seen in the CCC could be due to working within a rewarding clinical microsystem with high patient satisfaction and appreciation. - The CCC engagement assessment showed opportunities for improvement through better support, including trauma, stewardship, staff training, more organized quality improvement, which includes the involvement of all staff. Countermeasures: - New huddle structure showed need for improvement in ensuring only pertinent information is reviewed. - Marbles as stress indicators showed less stressful shifts over time. Final assessment: - Repeated staff engagement survey with additional questions showed mixed results, which is likely due to lack of time from shifting culture. - Additional survey questions regarding countermeasures were very positive and suggest they will have a positive impact. - Responses showed more value in huddle after implementing the new structure. Limitations: - Some results in quality improvement can only be expressed qualitatively. - Results are dependent on multiple variables: patient volume, outcomes, external circumstances, etc. • The Children’s Cancer Center showed that it is a highly reliable clinical microsystem with overall good engagement. • Implemented countermeasures have shown some improvements to fostering positivity, productivity, and continuing education. • Future Directions: - Continue with current countermeasures in place and repeat staff interviews. - Provide more structured training for new hires; add language training to continuing education materials. - Design a huddle board with daily staff engagement metrics. Conclusions

• The Children’s Cancer Center showed that it is a highly reliable clinical microsystem with overall good engagement.
• Implemented countermeasures have shown some improvements to fostering positivity, productivity, and continuing education.
• Future Directions:
  - Continue with current countermeasures in place and repeat staff interviews.
  - Provide more structured training for new hires; add language training to continuing education materials.
  - Design a huddle board with daily staff engagement metrics.