



A Passion for Performance

Southeastern Regional Medical Center Shares a Tale of Lean

Southeastern Regional Medical Center's Process Excellence Coordinator, Caroline Glus, has a "deep, burning passion" to make work easier for her healthcare colleagues, while still enabling them to provide excellent care to their patients. Glus has been able to realize that passion within her organization through the adoption of Lean, an operational system that focusing on reducing waste and maximizing value to the customer. The decision to think and practice Lean at SRMC has resulted in \$800,000 in cost savings from a single project, a significant cultural shift, and the designation as a Governor's Award of Performance Excellence in Healthcare recipient.

At a recent Lean Healthcare 300 class hosted by IES and the North Carolina Hospital Association, SRMC Vice President of Support Services David Sumner, MPH, FACHE, joined Glus to share SRMC's experience of transitioning to Lean. The class of aspiring performance excellence professionals listened as Sumner and Glus spoke frankly about the industry's high expectations and what it takes to meet them.

Thinking Lean, Learning Lean

While developing a strategic plan for SRMC to perform in the top 25% of healthcare facilities, Glus and Sumner uncovered sizable gaps in the hospital's processes, and sought to close the gaps by engaging a consultant to implement Lean. The most dramatic improvement happened in the lab, which saw \$800,000 in savings after applying Lean principles such as visual control and pull material replenishment.

Southeastern Regional Medical Center Challenge

SRMC wanted the knowledge that would allow it to customize and implement its own process improvements

IES Solution Lean Healthcare

Benefits

\$800,000 in cost savings, cultural shift toward ownership of the hospital's performance excellence program

Though Glus and her teammates were very pleased with the financial outcome, they also wanted an expert to transfer knowledge so that SRMC could facilitate its own Lean initiative. Glus wanted to stimulate more internal interest in the journey and see higher engagement from employees as well. When she began searching for a Lean consultant who could focus on teaching and coaching, she found IES and the Lean Healthcare series.

The series teaches the fundamental tools of Lean: value stream mapping, 5S, standardized work, A3, and kaizen—a rapid, systematic way of looking at a process to determine what improvements should be made, then implementing them in a quick and sustainable way—and teaches participant how to facilitate successful kaizen events themselves.

SRMC completed the 200 and 300 levels of the series and contracted with IES to support SRMC's subsequent kaizen events.

"IES provided a jumping-off point so that we could create our own programs, tailored to our own needs," said Glus.

“ We want to be the healthcare facility of choice. Our patients and our providers deserve efficient and effective processes. ”

—David Sumner,
Vice President of Support Services, SRMC

Growing Lean

Two years and countless kaizen events later, SMRC has developed a system to deploy what they call “Process Excellence” across the hospital. Their program is structured to share learning, reduce waste and achieve cultural transformation.

Glus acknowledged the clear importance of tracking financial gains made possible by Lean, but also notes that benefits like enhanced teamwork, employee engagement, growth of intellectual capacity, and building respect for others make a huge difference in improvement efforts, and position organizations for long-term, sustainable growth.

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