

Reduce communication failures to prevent patient harm

Deploying effective patient experience strategies

In 2014, The Joint Commission identified communication failures during shift reports across the U.S. as a leading cause of sentinel events—i.e., unanticipated events that result in harm to the patient. In 2011, the National Patient Safety Foundation focused on the bedside report as an important patient safety strategy.

Opportunity

To help Vizient® members advance their efforts to provide safe, high-quality care through effective team communication, a collaborative was launched with 12 members that selected their own projects for increasing consistency in their team communications and enhancing patient and family engagement.

Key recommendations from the collaborative

Operationalize rounding—Design rounds to be meaningful and meet team goals. Include a multidisciplinary team in planning the rounds. Start small and expand the rounds as they are refined.

Engage physicians and staff—Engage key providers and physician leaders. Observe and coach providers during rounds. Align front-line caregivers with outcome measures.

Involve patients—Keep patients at the center of the work. Provide welcome packets for patients that explain their role in care team communications. Seek immediate feedback from patients and resolve issues prior to discharge.

Consistently communicate—Communication must be consistent (“every patient, every time”). Reinforce the importance of intentional rounds in daily huddles. Maintain a culture of collaboration and improvement by increasing and enhancing nurse-physician communication before and after rounds.

Maintain accountability—Work to sustain project gains. Hold leaders accountable for ensuring that intentional hourly rounds occur. Leaders, including executive champions and medical directors, should regularly review quality metrics and investigate educational needs.

Levers for improving care team communications

Engage patients and families—Multiple disciplines must collaborate to create an environment in which the patient is involved, not isolated.

Message consistently—Use consistent messaging to promote and focus on the goal of improving the patient experience.

Communicate mindfully—The manner in which teams communicate information to a patient is as important as the information being communicated.

Overall collaborative results

Collaborative participants engaged in robust discussions and saw improvements in several metrics, described in Table 1.

Table 1. Performance improvements of collaborative participants

Metric	Improvement examples
HCAHPS scores	Improved performance on questions about care transitions by 8% Improved performance on questions about communicating medication side effect information by 9.8%
Patient flow and safety	Reduced average length of stay by 0.83 days Decreased the number of falls on one unit
Team rounding	Increased proportion of rounds that involved a nurse-physician team from less than 30% to 55% of patient visits

HCAHPS = Hospital Consumer Assessment of Healthcare Providers and Systems.

As the nation's largest member-driven health care performance improvement company, Vizient provides network-powered insights in the critical areas of clinical, operational, and supply chain performance and empowers members to deliver exceptional, cost-effective care.



For more information about engaging in the PI Collaboratives program, contact your network director or picollaboratives@vizientinc.com.

If you are a member of the Vizient Performance Improvement Collaboratives program, you can find the final report on this collaborative on the project page at www.vizientinc.com.