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**FLUSHING HOSPITAL MEDICAL CENTER**  
**Performance Improvement Initiative for Patient-Centered Care**



*The Labor Management Project supported a performance improvement (PI) initiative at Flushing Hospital that was aimed at better managing patients' pain and improving communication related to medication.*

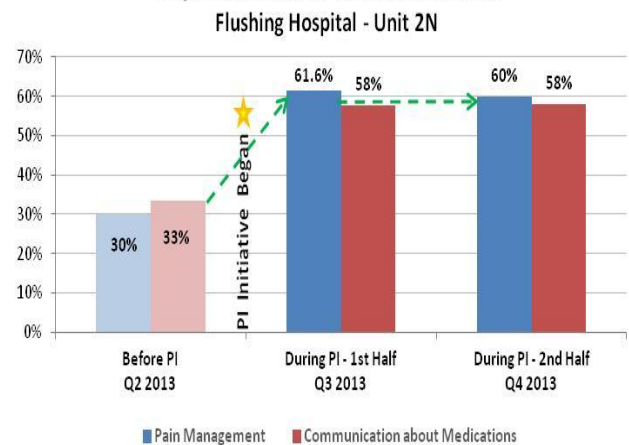
**The Challenge:** The federally-mandated HCAHPS survey, which inquires about patients' perspectives of hospital care, plays an important role in determining hospitals' Medicare reimbursement levels. In an effort to address lower than desired HCAHPS scores, union and management sponsors at Flushing Hospital invited the Labor Management Project (LMP) to facilitate a series of Patient-Centered Care (PCC) trainings for hospital staff. To build on the knowledge gained from the PCC trainings,

the LMP initiated a performance improvement project with two medical-surgical geriatric units (consolidated to one unit, 2N, for the purposes of this initiative). The team focused on improving pain management and communication about medication – two key indicators of patient satisfaction on the HCAHPS survey. These were particularly challenging issues for this unit because its patient population is linguistically diverse and many patients are elders with dementia.

**The Solution:** During a two-day PI project launch in the summer of 2013, the LMP worked with the unit's interdisciplinary team of employees and managers to establish goals and a work plan. To improve communication about medication, the team enlisted nurses, residents, nursing assistants, and other staff to create a supportive environment for patients and their family members to ask questions about medications. The team conducted in-services to inform colleagues about the "Patient Education about Medication" protocol, which unit staff implemented using the teach-back method with patients and/or their families. To address pain management, the team conducted in-services on the implementation of hourly rounding using the "4 Ps" (checking on pain, potty, position, and access to possessions). To cater to patients' diverse backgrounds, the team distributed prompts in English, Korean, Mandarin, and Spanish to help patients and their family members communicate with staff about pain and medication. The team tracked how often staff discussed pain with patients during each shift. Although the team faced a number of challenges, including unit closures, leadership changes, staff reassignments, and short staffing during the course of the project, the team members demonstrated a strong resolve to meeting their targets.

**The Results:** The team's goal was to raise the unit's scores on the two identified HCAHPS indicators to the New York state average (65% of respondents selecting "always"). They were successful in improving their "Pain Management" score from 30% (Quarter 2 of 2013) to 61.6% (Q3) and 60% (Q4) during the PI initiative. They also made significant advances in the area of "Communication about Medication," with an increase from 33% (Q2) to 58% (in both Q3 and Q4). While the team was only several points shy of the 65% mark, the nearly 100% improvement on both indicators was quite remarkable. The team members fully anticipate that these improvements will persist, as the PI group will continue to meet, measure, and improve the unit's outcomes.

**Improvement in HCAHPS Scores**



**Labor and Management Comments:** The team's work has been celebrated by union and management leaders alike. Remarks made at a recognition ceremony, organized to acknowledge the team members' accomplishments, included:

*We see ourselves as business partners with Flushing. We are here for the same purpose. We can only succeed as a team. We will continue to improve the institution so our HCAHPS scores continue to go up.*  
(Brian Joseph, 1199SEIU Vice President)

*What you have accomplished and what we will continue to accomplish through this initiative will help Flushing provide an excellent experience for patients. We look forward to continuing this work with our partners in 1199.* (Robert Levine, Flushing's Executive Vice President and COO)

*We are excited that you're committed to making the patient experience the best it can be. Thank you all for your hard work. We're so happy to already see results.*  
(Catherine Ferrari, Administrator of Professional Services, Flushing)

*It was amazing the way the LMP conducted everything and worked with all our different personalities. I'm so grateful I was a part of this team and this amazing project.*  
(Dr. Tamar Toronjadze, Chief of Internal Medicine and 2N team member)

*It was nice working with 1199 on this great project. I look forward to expanding this to other floors.*  
(Paul Cormerais, RN on 2N)

**Sponsors'  
Commitment to Joint  
Continuous  
Improvement:**

Flushing's sponsors were so impressed with the results of this initiative that they requested the LMP's support in establishing a Continuous Quality Improvement Joint Steering Committee that will oversee the execution of at least three additional PI initiatives at Flushing by the end of 2014.