



LABOR MANAGEMENT PROJECT

An employer and 1199SEIU partnership

Collaborating to Transform Ambulatory Care at Brookdale

October 11th, 2018



“Ambulatory care has a primary role in keeping people healthy so that they don’t need to go to the hospital,” said 1199SEIU United Healthcare Workers East Executive Vice President Joyce Neil to Brookdale University Hospital Medical Center’s new ambulatory care Departmental Labor Management Committee (DLMC). “I congratulate you for being here today to take the next step forward to improve ambulatory care at Brookdale.”

Along with consultants from the Labor Management Project (LMP) and the Registered Nurse Labor Management Initiative (RNLM), frontline workers and managers from Brookdale’s seven ambulatory care sites gathered in April to launch a DLMC that will oversee improvement efforts focused on customer service, teamwork and quality of care. The DLMC’s interdisciplinary team includes Medical Office Assistants, Patient Service Associates, Registered Nurses, Licensed Practical Nurses and Site Managers, many of whom are long-term Brookdale employees with upwards of 30 years tenure. The group has strong support from executive sponsors including Neil, Norma Amsterdam, Executive Vice President of 1199SEIU’s RN Division and Denise Lear-Evans, Vice President of Ambulatory Care at Brookdale.

Improving ambulatory care is crucial in the context of health care restructuring in Brooklyn and healthcare reform in New York State. Locally, Brookdale has joined Interfaith Medical Center and Kingsbrook Jewish Medical Center to form One Brooklyn Health, a system created to improve access to quality care—particularly primary and preventative care—in Central Brooklyn. One of this partnership’s goals is a major expansion in ambulatory care to meet the needs of underserved Brooklyn residents who are not currently receiving comprehensive primary care services. At the state level, New York’s Delivery System Reform Incentive Payment (DSRIP) program aims to reduce preventable hospitalizations, in part through investment in quality, integrated primary, specialty and behavioral healthcare in the community setting.

In her welcoming remarks, Lear-Evans delineated her aspirations for the DLMC. “My goal and vision for this team is to set the bar for all of ambulatory care in Brooklyn,” she said. “I see this as a catalyst for transformation.” Lear-Evans emphasized that the DLMC’s charge will be to enhance the experience for both external (patients) and internal (staff) customers.

Amsterdam also spoke about the importance of improving both patient engagement and collaboration among staff. “The way you receive and speak with the community sends a strong message... We as healthcare workers need to have a strong bond and communication among each other,” she said.

LMP and RNLM consultants introduced the DLMC to concepts and tools that will facilitate joint labor-management work on process and quality improvement. These included the stages of group development, the team effectiveness model and tools on how to lead jointly. Under the continued guidance of these consultants, the DLMC will meet monthly to develop a charter. The team will then examine patient and staff satisfaction data to inform their projects moving forward.

Participants demonstrated enthusiasm, engagement and thoughtful commitment to the process of developing a well-functioning DLMC and improving communication and teamwork among staff. Ending on

a high note, they shared their ambitions, including that Brookdale's ambulatory care services become "the provider of choice" and "the model for One Brooklyn Health."