



## PARTNERSHIP SUCCESS STORIES

Labor and management working together to improve care delivery and quality of work life



### Improving the Waiting Room Experience

#### Montefiore Hutchinson's Urology Department

*Montefiore Hutchinson Campus is an 11-floor, 280,000-square-foot ambulatory care center in Bronx, New York. The Labor Management Project (LMP) supported a labor-management process improvement initiative (PI) in its Urology Department.*

#### The Challenge

Montefiore Hutchinson's Urology Department aimed to improve the patient waiting room experience through enhanced customer service and staff communication.

#### The Solution

The LMP provided 11 Monte Hutchinson Urology Department staff with Patient Centered Care training. LMP consultants then guided a team, headed by management and Union co-leads and composed of management, 1199SEIU, and clinical and administrative staff, in a PI initiative. The initiative's objective was to improve the



patient wait experience in the Urology Department. Over the course of six months, LMP consultants met weekly with the PI team and co-leads to provide technical support, including modeling meeting facilitation, drafting work plans, maintaining meeting minutes, and monitoring project progress. The LMP also kept Labor Management sponsors informed of the team's progress, including facilitating mid review and final project presentations to all Hutchinson stakeholders. LMP consultants coached the

team on the PDSA (Plan, Do, Study, Act) process improvement methodology. With guidance from LMP Research, the PI team developed and administered a survey to measure patients' waiting room experience and how often they were being told about delays over 15 minutes. The team enlisted support from and educated all staff, including physicians, about their role in informing patients about delays. They also researched options to offer educational pamphlets for patients that explained the various procedure types and their duration. Furthermore, the labor-management PI team adopted these improvements:

- A new practice format to notify patients of delays. Urology patients who are still waiting 15 minutes past their scheduled appointment time receive communication about delays from staff at least three times during their visit.
- Nurses identify doctors by name when they call patients in to the exam room, in order to avoid confusion about why a patient might be called ahead of someone who had been waiting longer because the appointment was with a different physician.



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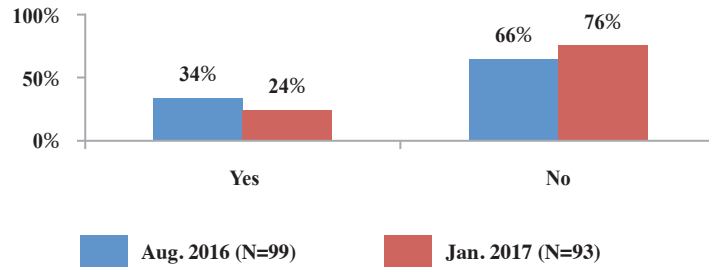


## The Results

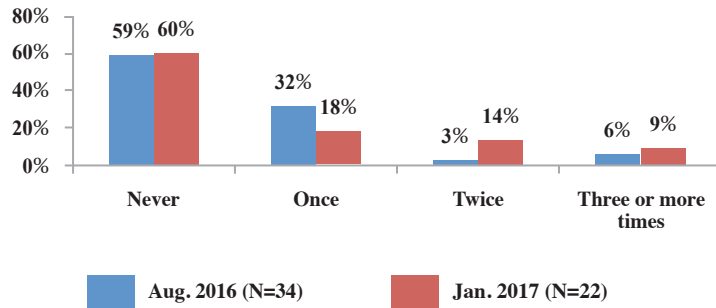
The Urology Department administered baseline surveys during a one-week period in mid-August 2016 and another round of surveys during the last week of December and first week of January 2017. The percentage of respondents who reported waiting more than 15 minutes for their scheduled appointment declined from 34% in August 2016 to 24% in January 2017, as shown in Figure 1. This suggests that by January 2017, more than three-quarters of all patients waited less than 15 minutes.

The percentage of survey respondents who reported waiting more than 15 minutes but were not informed of delays remained essentially the same (approximately 60%), as shown in Figure 2. However, the percentage of respondents who reported being informed about delays two or more times during their visit increased from 9% to 23%.

**Figure 1: Did You Wait More than 15 Minutes from Your Scheduled Appointment Time?**



**Figure 2: How Many Times Did Staff Communicate With You About Delays During Today's Visit?**



## Positive Feedback

**Lissen Simonsen, Montefiore Hutchinson Senior Director and project sponsor:** "I love the human touch the team has used," "Good interactions with patients make a big difference in their experience."

**Pansey Saa-Llewellyn, 1199SEIU Union Contract Administrator:** "The urology workers felt empowered and embraced the goals of the process improvement project. They were able to implement their ideas successfully to deliver the changes to improve wait time for better patient experience."

THE LABOR MANAGEMENT PROJECT (LMP) is a consulting group that brings labor and management together to address the complex challenges facing today's healthcare organizations. Funded through collective bargaining, the LMP is overseen by a board of trustees with representatives from 1199SEIU United Healthcare Workers East and the League of Voluntary Hospitals and Homes of New York (an employer association and bargaining agent).

The LMP's mission is to support the partnership of labor and management health care teams to achieve positive work environments, excellent care and community wellbeing. Goals include increasing worker voice and involvement; enhancing the quality of care; improving patient and staff satisfaction; and increasing operational effectiveness and performance.

The LMP offers a broad range of services and strategies, including organizational development and labor-management consulting, process improvement facilitation, skill-building sessions, workplace and community health, and research and evaluation.