

Team Member Safety Committee Addresses Staff Safety at St. John's Episcopal Hospital

BACKGROUND

According to the United State Department of Labor, Occupational Safety and Health Standards, "Workers in healthcare settings face significant risks of workplace violence. From 2002 to 2013, the rate of serious workplace violence incidents (those requiring days off for an injured worker to recuperate) was more than four times greater in healthcare than in private industry on average."

As a result of a Town Hall meeting where staff expressed grave concerns around the physical and verbal violence directed towards them from patients and visitors and at the request of 1199SEIU and management leadership at St. John's Episcopal Hospital (SJEH), the Labor Management Project (LMP) was asked to develop an organization-wide Team Member Safety Committee (TMSC) to address these concerns and increase the safety of all SJEH staff, residents, and volunteers.

HEALTHCARE WORKERS FACE SIGNIFICANT RISKS OF JOB-RELATED VIOLENCE



AIM

To increase the safety of all SJEH staff, residents, and volunteers (team members) by reducing the number of incidents that result or could result in physical and/or psychological harm to a team member because of patient or visitor behavior.

ACTIONS

- ◆ Creation of interdisciplinary labor and management Team Member Safety Committee (TMSC) and establishment of team charter, mission, and vision.
- ◆ Appointed three Committee co-leads and provided co-lead training and development.
- ◆ Established work teams: Education and Training, Data Collection, Communication and Community Outreach, and Wellness.
- ◆ Hospital and local community engagement: met with 101st Precinct Community Affairs Officers, attended monthly Community Advisory Committee meeting, and tabled at Patient Safety Fair.
- ◆ Root-cause analysis of all incidents that resulted or could have resulted in physical and/or psychological harm.
- ◆ Revision of workplace violence policies.
- ◆ Second victim trauma addressed through the Helping Healers Health program.
- ◆ Implementation of safety component to new team member orientation including information on the TMSC, incident reporting, hospital codes and code comfort, PMCS and CPI training requirements, and MHFA.

RESULTS

- ◆ Reductions between 2017 and 2018 in:
 - Incidents resulting in staff injury (9% reduction)
 - Incidents involving a disruptive patient (Assist 13) (24% reduction)
 - Incidents involving a disruptive visitor (Code Green) (10% reduction)
- ◆ Improved processes for incident reporting, including the capture of near misses and the re-launch of the "Eyes Open Hotline," a dedicated line for team members to report safety issues and concerns.
- ◆ Approval of increased FTEs for security personnel.
- ◆ Redesign of registrar counters.
- ◆ Signage regarding worker safety in the new ED.
- ◆ Mental Health First Aid (MHFA) training now available to team members.
- ◆ Recreational programs on the Behavioral Health Units increased from 4 to 5 sessions per day and from 6 to 7 days a week because of increased recreation therapist FTEs over the weekend.
- ◆ Development of processes to identify team members exposed to physical harm and/or direct/indirect psychological distress.
- ◆ Creation of a dashboard of incidents that resulted or could have resulted in physical and/or psychological harm to a team member.

