Improving Throughput Through Standardized Discharge Process in Med-Surgical Units

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BACKGROUND

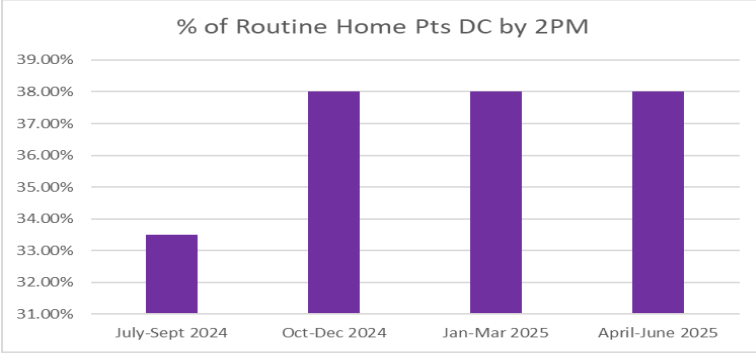
Timely patient discharge is a critical component of effective hospital throughput, impacting bed availability, patient satisfaction, and overall care efficiency. In September 2024, a standardized patient discharge process was implemented across all medical-surgical units to improve the timeliness of routine home discharges. The goal was to discharge 50% of patients with routine home discharge orders before 2:00 PM and within 120 minutes of the discharge order.

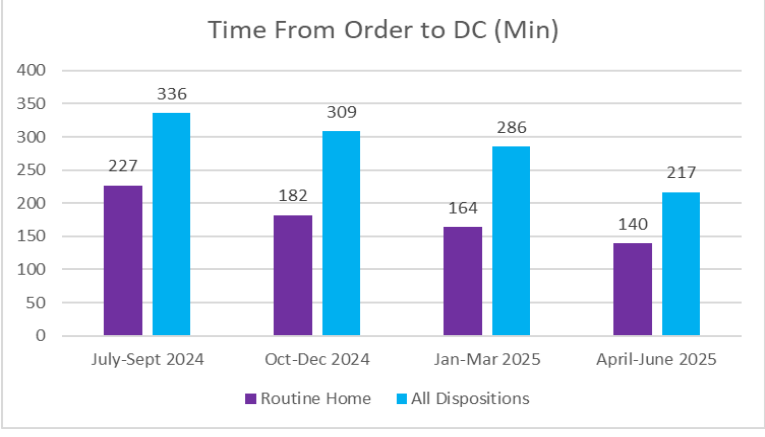
PURPOSE

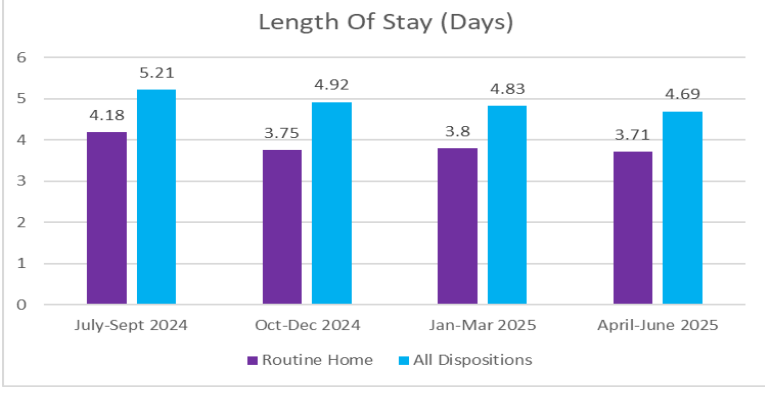
Streamlining and optimizing the discharge process would improve patient flow, enhance patient experience, increase operational efficiency and boost staff productivity.

METHODS

Components of Lean Six Sigma was utilized to create a process map o streamline the discharge process.
Education was provided to all nurses within med-surgical and float pool, case managers, and house supervisors.
Daily audits of discharges are being shared with unit managers and delays are being tracked and trended monthly.







RESULTS

Although there does not appear to be improvement towards the 50% of patients with routine home discharge orders before 2pm, there has been improvement in the time to discharge order and length of stay for these patients.

The graphs show the comparison of time from order to DC and length of stay of routine home patients and total discharge. There has been incremental steady improvement to both metrics that we hope to continue.

CONCLUSIONS

The success of this initiative highlights the impact of standardizing discharge practices, leveraging data for continuous improvement, and empowering nursing staff to drive change. The process is currently ongoing, and future phases will focus on continuing the sustaining performance and optimizing interdisciplinary collaboration to further enhance throughput and patient flow.

REFERENCES

Available on Request

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