

October 2, 2009

Mr. David O'Neill
Senior Program Officer
California HealthCare Foundation
1438 Webster Street, Suite 400
Oakland, CA 94612

Dear Mr. O'Neill,

On behalf of Valley Presbyterian Hospital, we want to thank you, the California HealthCare Foundation, Dr. David Belson, and the team of engineers from the Department of Industrial Engineering at the University of Southern California for partnering with us. The Valley Pres Team is honored to be one of three hospitals to have been selected for the *Improving Safety-Net Hospital Efficiency Project*.

The six-month partnership resulted in the identification and confirmation of several issues including:

1. Difficulties communication due to the physical layout and lack of technology
2. Lack of information for a patient flow dashboard
3. Lower room utilization than the benchmark
4. Delayed room turnover due to delayed start times and physical layout
5. Longer turnover times than benchmark
6. Late start times of the first case of the day
7. Problematic location of equipment and supplies due to the physical layout
8. Lack of clock synchronization
9. Challenges in meeting the needs of physicians
10. Unclear scheduling procedures

From day one, the Valley Pres Team was supportive of this project—the project was the first of its kind. Final recommendations were presented to the Medical Executive Committee on July 13, 2009. The engineers' findings and recommendations were very well received and feedback from the physician leaders was positive.

Executive Leadership, the Director of Surgical Services, the OR Nurse Manager, the Same Day Surgery/Recovery Nurse Manager, and several surgeons and anesthesiologists, took an active role to intertwine the engineers' recommendations with the hospital's current initiatives. Some of those changes include:

1. To improve communication among staff, wireless phones were provided to the department.
2. To improve communication of real-time information, an electronic board replaced the whiteboard.

3. To report accurate data, an electronic audit tool was developed to monitor key measures including start times, turnover times, OR utilization, and utilization of services. Before this audit tool, data were collected on paper by staff. The department is using Dr. Belson's benchmarks as its goals.
4. To improve patient flow, patients scheduled for the first surgery of the day are now prepped in the Recovery Unit, located adjacent to the OR on the first floor, instead of the Same Day Surgery Unit on the second floor.
5. To continue process improvement efforts, the Director of Perioperative Services has initiated a Lean Principles study that will map the staff's activities in the morning to identify issues in prolonged case times and turnovers.

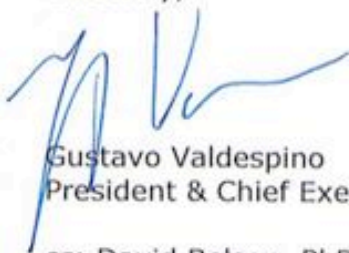
Overall, the *Improving Safety-Net Hospital Efficiency Project* had a positive impact on the Surgical Services Department and Valley Pres. The project stimulated interest in carrying on with process improvement efforts. Our start time results have helped us maintain a 0730 start time, and the department is pushing a preoperative clearance initiative that has been approved by two committees. This will improve not only our 0730 start time (first case of the day) but also every case that follows. Another example is our ability to now report accurate data. The room utilization report (a report that shows the amount of surgical time used against the amount of surgical time scheduled) has justified the department's overtime and callback. The engineers reported our monthly room utilization to be about 60%. Since the conclusion of the project our lowest room utilization has been 77% in a month of 122% overall utilization. As a follow up, the Director of Perioperative Services has engaged a student to conduct studies on case times and turnover times using the tools learned from the project.

Most importantly, the project had a profound effect on the patient population we serve. With improvements in patient flow, implementation of MEDITECH, an electronic audit tool, new technology, improved communication, better room utilization, we are able to increase patient access, capacity, quality, outcomes, and safety. At the end of the day, the patients are the reason we exist!

Valley Presbyterian Hospital is proud of its process improvement efforts, staff, physicians, and renovations in the OR. When you are in Los Angeles, we invite you to visit our facility again. Please let us know when your schedule may permit such a visit.

We welcome another partnership with the California HealthCare Foundation. Please keep us in mind for future opportunities.

Sincerely,



Gustavo Valdespino
President & Chief Executive Officer

cc: David Belson, PhD