



THE PROVEN PATH TO **IMPROVING** CARE

Driving Success Through Best Practices

TeleTracking is renowned across the healthcare industry for world-class solutions that help health systems deliver care to more patients across the care continuum. That commitment includes the need to evolve and adapt to meet the industry's changing needs, expectations and challenges. In this atmosphere, a customer's decision-making process goes beyond a decision about technology—it's a decision to commit to a long-term journey of continuous improvement and a completely new way of meeting staff and patient needs. And that's where nearly three decades of experience—and the associated deep base of knowledge—has led to a well-thought-out set of best practices that focus on the right activities and measures to drive impactful outcomes for both patients and staff.



BEST PRACTICE BEGINNINGS

Nearly three decades of collaborating with health systems has provided a tremendous amount of data and information. So much information, in fact, that the first step in establishing repeated patterns or themes of best practices involves rigorous review by a cross-functional team at TeleTracking to turn knowledge into an actionable, scalable plan. Best practices must be applicable to all hospitals and health systems—large urban, academic, rural, community.

“We start by looking at the foundational needs of a hospital, typically environmental services and patient transport, and how these tie into reducing patient wait times,” says Melissa Korzun, Manager, TeleTracking Program Management Office. “We also looked at the role that clinician's play in these process, as well as how national best practices tie to our own when designing comprehensive tactics to achieve patient care milestones.”

Given the level of detail involved at a foundational level the ongoing evolution and expansion of best practices crosses functional areas and relies on both the experience of clinical professionals, as well as IT experts.

“Forming best practices is a team effort to develop a library of situations with measurable tactics and metrics against them to show real movement and real results for our clients. Those tactics that we discover in our work over and over again in so many varying care situations are really our secret sauce for sharing transferable knowledge,” says Shelly Weisend, Managing Consultant, Client Delivery. “We have many working sessions along with in-depth discussions where we share our thoughts on what has been successful with the clients we've worked with: what solutions they had in place, how they're using them, and the best way to create digestible and consumable content.”

A FOUR-PART APPROACH

Taking their personal experiences in healthcare, along with what has been discovered at customer sites, the TeleTracking team created four areas of focus that health systems can use to improve their operations.

- Patient access best practices align operational and clinical resources to accelerate workflows through automation, process improvement, and data analysis,



ensuring the right patient arrives to the right bed the first time, regardless of the access point or care setting.

- Patient throughput best practices build a culture of effective communication that fosters patient progression across the care continuum. Establishing collaborative practices across care teams, such as nursing, transportation, and environmental services make it possible to deliver coordinated, efficient care.
- Patient discharge best practices provide the foundation for managing the expected, planned, coordinated and completed patient discharges, which leads to improved patient care, satisfaction and stable hospital capacity.
- Performance tools enable effective patient flow across the entire continuum providing real-time visibility at the health system level. Successful and sustained performance improves access to care, reduces length of stay, and accelerates timely discharges.

BEING ON-SITE, BRINGING BEST PRACTICES TO LIFE

The four areas of focus that we established help clients drive results. Then, to deliver the how-to, and for it to really come to life, our team is on-site, working with all levels of the organization,” says Susan Whitehurst, Managing Director, TeleTracking Advisory Services. “We spend a lot of time working through change management to create custom delivery plans with clients based on current metrics. We also help with strategic planning, information technology and executive coaching.”

This collaborative approach starts by helping a customer identify their challenges—the first day of the discovery phase—which involves education on the science of flow and the benefits they will realize as they move through their journey towards the goal of a fully operational command center. By understanding the foundations of flow, they also gain a clearer understanding of the key metrics that they should either be

improving or celebrating. This adds a rich layer of context beyond giving customers a set of best practices and telling them to implement them.

“We emphasize that within the four areas of focus, it is a step-by-step process on a journey to an effective patient flow strategy, and attention to detail, metrics and staff actions are critical early on. Once you’re able to sustain success at one step, then you move on to the next,” continues Weisend. “And that’s why it’s so important to listen and focus on a health system’s needs. For example, they may tell us that their goal is to bring in more patients, so we’ll first work with them to streamline their discharge process to free up capacity, and then help them grow their outreach and market position in their referral region.”

“In addition, a clear differentiator for TeleTracking is that there is balance between our technical experts and those of us with clinical expertise,” adds Whitehurst. “Customers know my background as a nurse and that leads to immediate acceptance because we’re all speaking the same language and have shared experiences and stories.”

CONTINUOUS EVOLUTION

As the complexities of healthcare continue to evolve, TeleTracking’s best practices are too. In addition, operational performance assessments are being introduced, which will make it possible to do more segmenting—and consequently know how many organizations have hit a metric and how many used a specific tactic to do so.

“We are continually improving our process for evaluating and documenting best practices to ensure that we are providing our customers with proven strategies to achieve outcomes,” concludes Korzun. “We have a team of cross-functional experts who are always working to identify new and emerging best practices; facilitate their review and approval; and help ensure that our workforce is trained and ready to help health systems apply these best practices for maximum effectiveness.”

A BEST PRACTICE IN PLAY

One best practice involves streamlining the time it takes when a patient is clinically ready to move, and has a clean bed assignment, to the time the patient occupies the bed in the TeleTracking.

For example, if a patient is admitted from the emergency department and is assigned a clean bed on a unit, but the patient waits two additional hours in the ED, that's two hours that a clean bed sits empty on a unit and two hours the ED bed remains occupied while another waiting ED patient isn't seen.

The best practice involves ensuring the patient is clinically and physically ready to move prior to the bed being assigned. For this to be successful, it's important that all disciplines come together to determine what tests/procedures can be done in the ED versus on the floor.

Ensuring the patient is ready to move also means a safe hand-off between staff in the ED and staff on the unit. In addition, automating the patient transport request once the bed is assigned helps further streamline the process.

The Results

Decreased boarding and improved left without being seen rates in the ED, and shorter length of stay for the patient due to increased efficiency.