



Service Priorities and Programmes
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A Staff Engagement Journey for improving Non-emergency Ambulance Transfer Service (NEATS) in Kwong Wah Hospital

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Introduction

Non-emergency Ambulance Transfer Service (NEATS) of Kwong Wah Hospital (KWH) is responsible for transporting patients with walking difficulty to and from hospitals/clinics and homes. In view of increase in aging population and ever raising pace of daily living culture in Hong Kong, pressure on workload and patient expectations, including waiting time and punctuality of NEATS, have been rising significantly. The Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) of the service reflected a genuine need of matching up with the corporate standards. Besides, a thorough analysis through NEATS Patient Satisfaction Survey conducted in 2011/12 also revealed a lowered satisfaction on patient waiting time, staff attitude and personal care to patient.

Objectives

It is our mission to improve the non-emergency ambulance transfer service both quantitatively and qualitatively with benchmarking to corporate standard. Our aim is to provide high quality transfer service to patients and to meet the HA target key performance indicators by engagement of multi-disciplinary staff.

Methodology

To overcome the structural issues stemmed from changing population and public expectations, Kwong Wah Hospital NEATS has taken a proactive staff engagement approach to enhance productivity and quality by multi-disciplinary team collaboration. The multi-disciplinary team was formed with participation of doctors, nurses, supporting portering staff, occupational health specialist and IT colleagues. Value and objectives of the NEATS were aligned and prioritized. Regarding the staff communication within the workforce of NEATS, regular staff forums and sharings were organized for exchange of views and management feedback from hospital development. Through effective communication and engagement of medical doctors, clinic & ward nurses, occupational safety & health team and other hospital support services such as domestic & portering, security and traffic control team, NEATS workforce and workflow have been re-structured and re-defined to meet the challenge. The major strategies are (i) focusing on awareness and training in staff health and

safety; (ii) improving vehicles and equipment availability; (iii) liaisons with all stakeholders for objective alignment; (iv) enhance patient care and communications. The specific targets were clearly set, both quantitative and qualitative. The performance was monitored cautiously at weekly interval with exceptional analysis.

Result

After project implementation and refinement, healthy and fully trained staff operate well-maintained vehicles to delivery safe, efficient and quality transport service to our patients. From the geriatric day patient's perspective and experience, the punctuality (within +/- 30 minutes of the appointment time) of NEATS has been sharply increased from 36% (2011 average) to 95% (as at Jan 2014). For punctuality of OPD and in-patient cases, KPI performance have been increased from 42% to 78% (OPD) and from 45% to 78% (in-patient) respectively. In fact, all target KPIs of NEATS service have been already met since 4Q2013 in KWH. More importantly, comparing two recent surveys on KWH NEATS service revealed a considerable improvement of patient satisfaction. The overall average patient satisfaction ratings of KWH have been increased from 7.7 to 8.7 out of maximum score 10. For waiting time, it has been raised from 2.9 to 4.0 out of maximum score 5. Besides, the survey showed that our staff attitude to patients had been increased from 3.8 to 4.6 out of maximum score 5. Besides, workforce productivity has been increased by improving staff awareness in personal health and working skills for manual handling procedures. Injury on duty (IOD) sick leave day has been decreasing from 750 days in 2010/11 to 178 days in 2013/14 (up to Feb 2014).