

HATE TO WAIT?

When you have to devote several hours three times a week to receive dialysis treatments, you don't want to spend extra time in the waiting room.

So, Mercy's Dialysis and Lean & Continuous Improvement Departments teamed up to make sure patients receive their treatments on time.

Dialysis provides acute and chronic hemodialysis, as well as home care program peritoneal dialysis. These lifesaving procedures are often intermediate steps for patients awaiting kidney transplant surgery.

Working together, Lean and Dialysis staff members listened to patients – a critical component of Mercy's patient-centered approach to care. They also talked to staff to discern where process changes needed to be made in order to make the high quality care offered at Dialysis even better.

"We have staff members dedicated to starting and completing the patient treatment, as well as a dedicated staff person to attend to our patient's comfort and visit with them, while monitoring their care. This person's role is solely dedicated to responding to the needs of one patient during treatment," explains Tawnya Salsbery, Director of Mercy Dialysis.

"After reviewing the process and using our Lean and Continuous Improvement tools, we were able to achieve more than 90 percent of patients receiving treatment at their scheduled time. Because the process was standardized, this is a permanent solution," says Principle Lean Facilitator Guillermo De La Rosa. Staff satisfaction improved as well as a dramatic improvement in patient satisfaction.

In addition to reducing wait time, the Lean and Continuous Improvement evaluation resulted in benefits like improved supply management; enhanced care planning by the team that includes physicians, nurse specialists, social workers and dietitians; streamlined admissions processing; and infection control. One improvement to efficiency and safety is that dialysis patients are given their own personal blood pressure cuffs to reduce the possibility of infection.

Mercy Medical Center opened the first outpatient dialysis program in the area more than 20 years ago. That year, 563 treatments were performed and today, more than 27,000 treatments are performed.

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