

Healthy Hospital™ initiative takes off in Kentucky

The per capita cost for health care continues to rise and the number of hospital injuries and deaths attributed to medical errors are of concern to the health care industry and to society. Finding and applying techniques that effectively reduce costs, increase throughput, and reduce injuries and deaths are needed. Hospitals have been working diligently to achieve these ends. However, working harder is not the answer. What is needed is a systems improvement approach.

Innovative Productivity, Inc.

The Healthy Hospital™ Initiative assembles a team of quality professionals and health industry experts to help the health care industry import quality improvement methods from manufacturing and industry to hospitals and the health care industry.

(IPI), a recognized leader in manufacturing process improvement, together with the University of Kentucky's Center for Manufacturing, Sullivan University, and the Kentucky Community and

Technical College System (KCTCS), has initiated an effort to apply process improvement methodologies to the healthcare industry. IPI, which operates the McConnell Technology & Training Center (MTTC), designed the initiative to promote the adoption of Lean techniques and other quality methods in the health care industry.

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Dr. Mark Dean, Program Manager for IPI, explained the reasoning behind promoting manufacturing industry quality improvement initiatives for hospitals: "We've seen tremendous improvement in the operating efficiencies, quality, and competitive position in manufacturing companies that have adopted a continual improvement program. Hospitals and other healthcare service providers are beginning to achieve similar results using the same tools." These results include increased patient throughput, decreased errors, lower costs, and great profitability. IPI's Healthy Hospital initiative will help Kentucky hospitals achieve these important goals and benefits.

Although the health care industry is very different from manufacturing, improving quality in the health care industry is all about process improvement. "While the manufacturing and health care industries are significantly different in terms of what they actually do, they nonetheless accomplish their respective objectives by performing

processes. Thus, while the content of their processes is different, the same process improvement tools can be used in both industries," commented Dean. A "process" in this case is the steps an organization goes through to accomplish some objective.

One set of tools being successfully borrowed from manufacturing and applied to other industries is called "Lean Enterprise." In a nutshell, Lean is about *creating customer value*, and can be explained as five basic steps:

- Identify *Value* from the customer's perspective
- Identify the *Value Stream* for the product or service
- Remove waste and design the value stream to improve *Flow*
- Produce based on customer *Pull*
- Continuously improve the value stream towards *Perfection*

Lean focuses on reducing waste and enhancing value-added activities. It helps to eliminate a great deal of the "waste" of waiting by first

identifying all the steps in a chosen process (such as check-in during an emergency room visit), determining which steps contribute value to the process (value-stream mapping), and then determining which steps can be eliminated, combined or made more efficient in order to eliminate wasted time.

Long employed in the manufacturing industry, the health care industry is beginning to reap benefits from the application of Lean methodologies. Dean recommends that hospitals "start small" with Lean, then spread the results. "Don't approach this as we have in the past by spinning everyone up with a lot of training, setting up false expectations, then failing miserably by insufficient follow-through. Rather, pick a process, assign a team of employees that typically work on that process, and do what's called a 'rapid improvement event.' When you are convinced that the results are real and sustainable, spread the effort to other high-



Mark Dean

leverage processes."

Ultimately, through the Healthy Hospital initiative, hospitals in Kentucky will achieve improved patient safety, increased patient satisfaction, reduced errors, reduced costs, increased efficiencies, increased throughput, and overall, an enhanced bottom line.

For more information on the Healthy Hospital initiative, contact Dr. Mark Dean, Program Manager for Innovative Productivity, Inc. at (502) 367-2186 ext. 781 or mdean@mttc.org.

NST Center tests new tool in U.S. Navy's \$1 billion per year fight against rust



By Delmar Doyle, Executive Director, National Surface Treatment Center

Rust is the single most pervasive maintenance problem that the U.S. Navy faces every day.

Corrosion damage to Navy ships costs more than \$1 billion per year. Ships are constantly in need of minor repairs to small surface areas where coatings were

improperly applied, rust has come through, and/or where coatings have worn.

There are three ways to repair small areas onboard ships:

- Paint over the area (fast, but rust comes through again quickly)
- Scrape the area and repaint it (not as fast, and

rust comes through again quickly)

- Blast or grind the area and then repaint it (slow, messy, environmentally hazardous, but the right way to do it)

Typically, sailors or

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