

Spotlight on Wausau Health Services

In October of 2011, Wausau Health Services (WHS) joined the STAR-SI program. The first change project they undertook was to reduce the average wait times from the client's or referrer's first contact with the agency, to an intake session in less than seven days. Their plan to accomplish this was to implement same-day/next-day intake or walk-in approaches with their Opioid Maintenance Treatment Program.

Their first rapid cycle involved designating Tuesday as their walk-in assessment day and having referrals complete an assessment with Tekia. On Wednesday, the clients completed the Orientation Group and then on Thursdays they were admitted to the clinic.

Wait time data was not kept prior to this change project, therefore census and revenue were chosen as data to measure the success of the change project. Comparing the census of 2010 Q4 (-3%) to the growth in census in 2011 Q4 of (3.1%), WHS experienced a 6.1% census growth. Nearly 30% of the total census growth for 2011 was accomplished in Q4. Revenue also increased by \$10K from Q3 to Q4 of 2011, which took WHS from being \$7K behind budget at the end of Q3 to \$3K ahead of budget at the end of Q4.

Based on this data, during the first quarter of 2012, Mondays were added to Tuesdays for walk-in assessments. In addition to Tekia, Sue and April were also now responsible for completing the walk-in screens.

During the first quarter of 2012, WHS had 57 admissions, an improvement of 13 per quarter with a past quarter average of 44. There was also a 24.6% increase in admissions from Q4 2011 to Q1 2012. The Q1 revenue was \$63.7K ahead of budget. In addition, census increased from 259 at the end of Q4 to 280 at the end of Q1, which was 23.4% ahead of budget. This was a 7.5% increase in census from Q4 2011 to Q1 2012 and was equivalent to approximately 2 years of budgeted growth for the clinic. Comparing growth in Q2 2011 (+3.8%) to the growth in Q2 2012 (9.1%), WHS has experienced 17.49% census growth from Q2 2011 to Q2 2012. The expected growth was around 2% for 2012. This demonstrates a total census growth of 50 patients from June 2011 to June 2012. As a result, 2 additional full-time counselors over the past year have been hired to accommodate the growth.

Finally, a comparison of the revenue from Q2 of 2011 to Q2 of 2012, the revenue increased by \$86K and as of Q2, YTD revenue was ahead of budget by \$155K (52%).

The real winners in this change project are the clients who receive face to face contact in a supportive treatment environment when they seek services because the barriers to receiving treatment have been removed.

The Wausau Health Services Change Team has accomplished these impressive results with a change team leader and team that are open to changing processes for the benefit of the client and to improve the business case of the agency in a changing behavioral health delivery environment. They have successfully implemented the NIATx model by implementing rapid cycles, reviewing the data and then determining their next step.