



Healing the System: How a Hospital Conquered Sterile Processing Challenges



Issue:

Quality deficiencies in sterile processing at a community-based hospital resulted in delays and cancellations in surgery, increased dissatisfaction among surgeons and patients, as well as citations from regulatory agencies. The hospital's Sterile Processing department was experiencing staffing challenges during a time of significant staff and leadership turnover which contributed to their quality and efficiency problems.



Approach:

- Conducted a detailed analysis of the value stream including workflow, management of all resources, and communication system.
- Implemented a staffing plan to match hourly demand, improved recruitment strategies, and enhanced the onboarding of inexperienced staff with an apprenticeship model.
- Established a preventive maintenance process that included rapid elevation of issues.
- Created a Plan For Every Part (PFEP) to establish purchasing needs.
- Established a daily engagement system with visual management that engages staff and leaders to reflect on performance and issues from the prior day, establish a robust plan to meet customer needs, and engage staff in problem-solving with real-time escalation.



Results:

- 87% decrease in overall defect rate in 6 months.
- 94% decrease in contamination rate within 6 months.
- Zero surgery delays and cancellations due to SPD issues, down from 8.5% of cases at the beginning of the engagement.
- Patients receive timely and safe surgeries
- The SPD and surgical staff have the necessary tools to care for patients.
- The staff feels encouraged by the changes and says it feels different than anything they have done before.