

**Patient Safety Initiative
Park Nicollet Health Services
2003 Acclaim Award Honoree**

One of the 2003 Acclaim Award Honoree is Park Nicollet Health Services for its Patient Safety Initiative, which increased error reporting and compliance with standardized guidelines by adopting a Six Sigma approach to improvement.

Park Nicollet Health Services is an integrated delivery system serving the Twin Cities, Minnesota, featuring a hospital, 25 clinics, 485 physicians and 1.7 million patient visits per year. After years of focusing on isolated projects with pharmacy and specific departments to reduce medication errors, leadership observed that these projects did not significantly move the organization in the direction of error-proof organizational care processes. They realized that creating a safer environment for patients required changing the organization on many fronts. In 2001, Park Nicollet embraced Six Sigma (a process improvement approach frequently used in manufacturing that focuses on minimizing defects and linking change to organizational strategies) to systematically select system-wide patient safety initiatives.

Goal

To create an environment where all staff members welcome the opportunity to report an error and to feel responsible for preventing errors in their work area

Intervention

Park Nicollet was able to achieve its goals by educating and changing the organizational culture, introducing Web-based reporting system for errors, implementing improvement projects based on known best practices and root cause analysis (RCA), using Six Sigma methodology, converting to an automated medical record, and developing online clinician order entry to reduce the possibility of medication errors.

Highlights

- Periodic e-mails, posters, and other alerts remind all staff they can report errors using the Web-based error form; this data is used to select improvement projects based on known best practices and root cause analysis (RCA).
- Standardized the patient identification process was developed for surgical procedures.
- Significant staff time was devoted to learning Six Sigma.
- Clinicians receive letters containing direct feedback on their orders (copies included), reinforcing safe prescribing habits and/or commending them for errorless orders.
- Online clinician order entry was developed based on standardized evidence-based guidelines.

Results

As of March 2002, Park Nicollet had significant improvements in error reporting and compliance with standardized processes:

- Increased the monthly average for errors reported (139 to 252) which increased the number of RCAs completed (0.8 to 4.3)
- 100% compliance with surgical identification procedure (baseline 71%)
- Decreased transcription error rate from 19% to 5%
- 78% increase in percentage of orders that adhered to safe prescribing practices
- 100% of providers will use the shared electronic medical record by February 24, 2003