

WellSpan Good Samaritan Hospital

2025 HAP Achievement Award Optimal Operations Award—Small/Medium Division

Optimizing Hospital Throughput: A Multidisciplinary Approach and Cultural Transformation for Improved Patient Flow and Outcomes

The Goal

Like many hospitals, an initial assessment revealed hospital-wide barriers to patient flow, including staffing gaps, delayed transfers, poor coordination, and limited imaging access—especially affecting the ED, ICU, and inpatient units. Improving patient flow quickly became a system-wide priority.

The Intervention

To improve patient flow, the organization introduced daily and weekend discharge huddles, surge calls during high census, and weekly meetings to tackle complex discharge barriers. Provider workflows were restructured for greater efficiency, with a focus on timely discharges supported by an 11 a.m. goal. Virtual nursing was added to assist high-turnover units, and crisis services were relocated outside the ED to create a safer, more appropriate environment for behavioral health patients. These efforts were reinforced by cultural shifts and strong team engagement, ensuring sustainable, system-wide improvements.





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Results

The organization saw major gains in patient flow, safety, and satisfaction. Excess days dropped 28 percent, ED boarding minutes fell 90 percent, and wait times were cut by more than half. Rates of falls, workplace violence, and patients leaving without being seen or completing treatment declined, with no rise in readmissions. Patient satisfaction rose 57 percent, alongside improvements in staff engagement and retention.