MERCURY

Reducing Delays & Improving Patient Flow in Acute Care Settings

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Introduction:

Delays in acute care settings can significantly affect patient outcomes, operational efficiency, and overall healthcare quality. The Reducing Delays and Improving Patient Flow in Acute Care Settings course helps healthcare professionals overcome systemic inefficiencies. By addressing bottlenecks, streamlining care coordination, and improving scheduling protocols, participants will learn how to achieve measurable improvements in service delivery.

The Reducing Delays and Improving Patient Flow in Acute Care Settings course integrates evidence-based strategies to manage demand variability, address capacity constraints, and facilitate effective discharge planning. Through real-world examples and interactive case studies, learners will gain actionable insights to apply in their clinical environments.

The Reducing Delays and Improving Patient Flow in Acute Care Settings program emphasizes data-driven decision-making to optimize emergency department ED throughput and reduce overcrowding in emergency departments. Whether they are in nursing, administration, or quality improvement, it provides a toolkit for enhancing acute care flow and reducing avoidable delays.

Targeted Groups:

The Reducing Delays and Improving Patient Flow in Acute Care Settings training targets professionals seeking specialized knowledge and skills:

- Hospital administrators oversee operational efficiency.
- Emergency department managers seek improved patient throughput.
- Clinical nurse leaders aim to optimize unit workflows.
- Physicians are responsible for care transitions.
- Discharge coordinators play a crucial role in managing patient flow.
- Healthcare quality improvement professionals.
- Bed management and patient logistics teams.
- Operations and process improvement consultants in healthcare.
- Health informatics professionals utilize data to enhance workflow.
- Public and private acute care facility leadership.
- Policy advisors focused on reforms in acute care delivery.

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Course Objectives:

Participants will achieve the following objectives by completing the Reducing Delays and Improving Patient Flow in Acute Care Settings course:

- Define the causes of delays in acute care environments.
- Analyze patient flow challenges through real-time data and metrics.
- Identify strategies to reduce emergency department overcrowding.
- Evaluate system-level approaches to streamline care coordination.
- Apply process improvement methods to manage patient throughput.
- Design action plans to eliminate discharge bottlenecks.
- Develop solutions to manage patient demand and bed capacity.
- Measure performance using flow-related KPIs and dashboards.
- Implement cross-functional communication protocols effectively.
- Recommend structural and procedural enhancements.
- Interpret analytics to support operational decision-making.
- Facilitate team-based interventions to sustain improvements in patient flow.
- Promote a patient-centered model while enhancing system efficiency and effectiveness.
- Align flow improvement strategies with hospital-wide goals.
- Communicate change initiatives effectively to all stakeholders.
- Integrate daily flow huddles and escalation protocols to ensure seamless operations.
- Develop skills in leading flow-focused quality improvement projects.

Targeted Competencies:

Participants will gain the following competencies during the Reducing Delays and Improving Patient Flow in Acute Care Settings program:

- Understand the causes of delays in acute settings.
- Assess key patient flow metrics.
- Map and redesign care processes.
- Apply real-time data in operational decisions.
- Optimize discharge planning and coordination.
- Improve emergency and inpatient bed flow.
- Lead interdisciplinary improvement initiatives.
- Communicate operational goals.
- Align patient flow goals with clinical priorities to ensure effective care delivery.
- Sustain change through continuous improvement practices.

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Course Content:

Unit 1: Understanding Acute Care Delays and System Bottlenecks:

- Define patient flow and its relevance in acute care.
- Explore typical delay points in emergency and inpatient care.
- Analyze national and international benchmarks for patient flow.
- Examine patient journey mapping as a diagnostic tool for understanding the patient's experience.
- Identify barriers to efficient patient transitions.
- Investigate root causes of discharge and admission delays.
- Review the impact of delayed diagnostics and lab turnaround times.
- Assess the role of non-clinical delays in patient flow.
- Discuss metrics used to quantify delays and length of stay.

Unit 2: Strategic Interventions to Enhance Patient Flow:

- Introduce evidence-based frameworks for flow improvement.
- Examine the role of structured discharge planning protocols in healthcare.
- Optimize bed management systems and visibility tools to enhance efficiency and effectiveness.
- Implement real-time location systems RTLS for patient tracking and monitoring.
- Integrate command center models in large hospital systems.
- Utilize demand forecasting tools to manage variability.
- Apply Lean and Six Sigma principles in acute care settings.
- Explore the differences between “pull” and “push” patient movement strategies.
- Facilitate proactive patient rounds and discharge planning to ensure seamless patient care.

Unit 3: Technology-Enabled Flow Optimization:

- Use health information systems for flow coordination.
- Introduce automated bed tracking and patient assignment systems.
- Analyze the impact of electronic dashboards on decision-making.
- Monitor key performance indicators using analytics platforms.
- Explore predictive modeling to forecast patient surges.
- Integrate electronic medical record EMR alerts for discharge readiness.
- Leverage telemedicine to reduce unnecessary admissions.
- Use digital tools to streamline interdisciplinary communication.
- Utilize AI-based decision support to enhance throughput.

Unit 4: Multidisciplinary Team Approaches to Reducing Delays:

- Build flow-focused interdisciplinary care teams.
- Engage frontline staff in identifying areas of delay.
- Facilitate cross-department huddles and coordination.
- Promote shared accountability for discharge planning.
- Standardize roles and responsibilities for flow processes.
- Embed clinical leadership in flow improvement initiatives.
- Create escalation plans for capacity surges.
- Train teams in communication tools such as SBAR.
- Foster a culture of operational awareness and responsiveness.

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Unit 5: Sustaining Long-Term Flow Improvement and Change Management:

- Develop sustainability plans for flow projects.
- Monitor outcomes and refine interventions continuously.
- Implement flow champions and local ownership models to enhance operational efficiency.
- Design visual management boards for transparency.
- Align patient flow strategies with institutional performance goals.
- Communicate wins and lessons learned across departments.
- Embed flow improvement in annual planning cycles.
- Introduce staff incentives linked to key performance indicators, such as flow targets.
- Evaluate impact using post-implementation reviews and metrics.

Final Insights & Key Takeaways:

Improving patient flow in acute care is essential for enhancing care quality and operational resilience. This Reducing Delays and Improving Patient Flow in Acute Care Settings training offers a proven pathway to eliminate inefficiencies and reduce delays. By equipping professionals with strategic, technical, and collaborative tools, the course empowers sustainable change. Participants leave with actionable knowledge, ready to drive improvement in their healthcare environments.