

DIVERSIFYING PROVIDER TEAMS TO IMPROVE KEY METRICS

CASE STUDY

PARTNERSHIP BACKGROUND

A 139-bed hospital in Arizona collaborated with SCP Health (SCP) to transform the provider hiring and staffing processes for its Hospital Medicine (HM) program. The facility's HM leadership historically only hired physicians, despite heavy patient volumes and rising compensation costs. Additionally, the active physicians expressed concerns and reservations about incorporating nurse practitioners (NPs) and physician assistants (PAs) into their team.

GOALS

- ▶ Build a diverse and collaborative clinician team
- ▶ Reduce individual provider workload
- ▶ Improve readmission rate and LOS
- ▶ Decrease hospital subsidy cost

STRATEGY

Initially, the facility's Medical Executive Committee (MEC) was apprehensive about expanding the scope of practice and hiring of non-physician providers. The bylaws in place reflected this mindset:

- ▶ All notes and orders required physician co-signature
- ▶ All NPs, PAs, and certified registered nurse anesthetists (CRNAs) were lumped into the hospital's "Allied Health" group

SCP's Group Medical Officer, a vocal champion of NPs/PAs/CRNAs, along with the facility's HM Program Director, who is an NP himself, used the following tactics to win over facility leadership and blaze a path forward:

- ▶ Cultivated strong relationships with the MEC members to gain trust and loyalty
- ▶ Demonstrated the amount of time and money that could be saved by hiring more NPs/PAs/CRNAs and allowing them to practice more autonomously
- ▶ Presented the excellent track record of the existing NPs/PAs/CRNAs and their ability to drive improvement of length of stay (LOS), readmissions, patient experience, and other key metric

IMPACT

Ultimately, the MEC embraced the creation of a more diverse provider team with expanded roles for NPs/PAs/CRNAs and agreed to amend the facility bylaws to the following:

- ▶ Only admission orders, history and physical, and discharge summaries require physicians to cosign
- ▶ NPs, PAs, and CRNAs are now called Advanced Practice Providers
- ▶ NPs get their own DEA numbers and license

In just **one year**, the facility experienced the following benefits from this culture change:

- ▶ **Staffing:**
 - Recruited new clinicians to expand the HM provider team from four physicians to nine physicians and three NPs, working collaboratively and uniformly together
 - Saved the hospital over \$300K/year by decreasing use of locum tenens
- ▶ **30-day average readmissions rate:** Reduced from 12% to 7.7%
- ▶ **Average LOS:** Reduced from 4.5 to 3.92 days



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