

Lean Helps Design a Patient-Centered Ambulatory Care Center

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Client Challenge

A healthcare organization decided to create a new ambulatory care center focusing on an enhanced patient experience. From arrivals to procedure rooms to patient follow-up, key areas and functions would be designed with the patient in mind. In addition, this client sought to:

- Centralize and combine administrative staff
- Increase flexibility in room design and layout
- Improve floor utilization
- Develop a well-trained and cross-trained staff

To help drive the layout of this new facility in its early stages, the client turned to the lean-improvement experts of RWD for process analysis and a future-state map.

Our Solutions

The RWD/care center team was able to devise a design that reduced the new facility's floor space needs by 10 percent. They had a significant impact on the care center's reception area staffing, specifying four instead of eight receptionists. The goal of creating a well-trained, cross-trained workforce was proven feasible. And with the lean tools provided to them by RWD, the care center staff would be able to implement and maintain continuous improvement.

Our Approach

RWD worked with the care center team to provide overview training on lean facility design and to develop a design plan for the new center. To analyze the desired patient flow and processes, they applied lean design tools. These included value stream mapping, integrated flow charts, waste analysis and swim lane diagrams. The team looked at processes such as:

- Patient access to service
- Patient communication
- Scheduling access
- Patient greeting and reception
- Patient rooming
- Patient results reporting/follow-up
- Employee and physician engagement and performance support

The team also developed recommendations for layout changes, job repurposing, patient care and employee training. Subsequently, an operational plan was created for facility launch and start-up.