2023 AzHHA Quality Awards – Project summaries: Winners

Gila River Health Care: “Critical Access to Health Care”
Gila River Health Care's "Mobile Integrated Health - Community Paramedicine" program at Hu Hu Kam Memorial Hospital was developed to address the needs of the Community by enhancing care coordination and reducing unnecessary emergency department visits. Utilizing a patient-centered approach, the program has achieved positive outcomes through process improvement methods like the MIH-CP Workflow Process Map and has reported a significant reduction in the rate of hospital admissions. Leadership, planning, and continuous feedback played critical roles in the success of the program, and the lessons learned highlight the importance of collaboration, stakeholder engagement, and consistent communication.

Mayo Clinic Arizona: “Stroke Door to Needle Times: Improvement and Sustainability”
Mayo Clinic in Arizona implemented the "W.I.N.G.S. to Thrombolytic Therapy” project in the Emergency Department to optimize ischemic stroke treatment, focusing on enhancing care coordination and reducing time to treatment. Through leadership and planning, paired with process improvement methods such as a stroke checklist, they achieved significant success, earning the Gold Plus Award for stroke care. The project emphasized the importance of timely intervention, continuous feedback, and collaboration to achieve better outcomes for stroke patients.

Southern VA Health Care System: “COVID Operational Status Process”
The Southern Arizona VA Healthcare System initiated the "COVID Operational Status Process" in response to the unique challenges presented by the pandemic, particularly in delivering healthcare to veterans. By utilizing systematic process improvement methods, they revamped their operations to become more efficient and adaptable to the changing COVID-related circumstances. The outcomes of this initiative showcased improved healthcare delivery, reflected by enhanced facility response times, clearer patient communication methods, and better utilization of available resources.

Southern VA Health Care System: “Native American Advocacy”
The Southern Arizona VA Healthcare System undertook the "Native American Advocacy Project" to address the identified need for better planning, contacting, and follow-up with Native American patient enrollees. Through leadership and data-driven process improvement methods, the project achieved significant growth in Native American enrollment from CY20 to CY22. Results highlighted improved outcomes in terms of desirable contacts, underscoring the project’s potential in bridging historical trust gaps with the Native American community and enhancing overall healthcare delivery.

Phoenix VA Health Care System: “CAUTI Prevention”
The Phoenix VA Health Care System launched a multifaceted approach to reduce Catheter-Associated Urinary Tract Infections (CAUTI). Through a combination of strategic goals, advanced process improvement methods, and the use of several analysis tools, they aimed to improve patient care and reduce the prevalence of CAUTI. The results showcased a significant decrease in CAUTI rates, over 900 days without a CAUTI in the ICU, and a 71% reduction in catheter utilization.

Summit Healthcare Association: “Implementing Peer Support Specialists into the ED”
Summit Healthcare introduced Peer Support Specialists into the Emergency Department to address the
significant needs of patients presenting with Opioid Use Disorder (OUD) and Substance Use Disorder (SUD). Through an array of process improvement methods, including feedback mechanisms and data-driven approaches, they aimed to provide evidence-based interventions and personalized care. The results emphasized the importance of personalized care, timely interventions, and empowerment through peer support, all contributing to enhanced recovery pathways and improved quality of patient life.

Northern Cochise Community Hospital: “Rural Hospital Emergency Management”
Northern Cochise Community Hospital, a rural critical access hospital, identified a pressing need to prepare for mass casualty incidents given its location in a high traffic region near the U.S. and Mexico border. To enhance readiness, they implemented a comprehensive Vulnerability Analysis, expanding their Emergency Department capacities, and adopted the Homeland Security’s FMEA planning model. As a result of these strategies and consistent training, the hospital has improved its capabilities in disaster situations, ensuring a more robust and effective response to potential mass casualty events.

Cornerstone Specialty Hospital Southeast Arizona: “Acute Transfer Out Process”
Cornerstone Specialty Hospital in Tucson identified an urgent need to reduce acute patient transfers out of their facility to ensure the highest quality care and patient satisfaction. To address this, they implemented a comprehensive Failure Mode Effects Analysis (FMEA) process, focusing on clinical judgment, proper documentation, and active communication with external facilities. As a result, they witnessed significant improvements, with reduced transfers leading to a better continuum of care for patients.

Yuma Regional Medical Center: “Keeping Patient Centered Care in the Community”
Yuma Regional Medical Center identified the need to enhance the patient experience for children with complex medical conditions, aiming for more coordinated and comprehensive care through community collaborations. Using a range of process improvement methods, they emphasized evidence-based practices, partnerships with healthcare providers, and specific care protocols, such as the "Know Me" cards for Oncology patients. The results demonstrated reduced hospital stay durations, fewer emergency department visits, and improved patient and family experiences.