Success makes process improvements contagious in healthcare system radiology departments.

Lean projects aid cross-functional teams.

Your radiology department must improve to keep up with competition and meet growing demand. You want to improve patient throughput, shorten wait times and improve scanner utilization. The solution lies in engaging staff in a long-term change initiative. Where can you turn for help?

Jake Nunn found himself in that position as director of metro region imaging services with Aurora Health Care, responsible for radiology departments at four hospitals in Milwaukee and southeastern Wisconsin.

**Early successes.**

Nunn and his colleagues are now transforming radiology services by using Lean methods delivered by the GE Healthcare Performance Solutions team. In just one year, radiology process improvements brought benefits calculated by Aurora to be worth $1.4 million at three hospitals, while staff satisfaction and patient loyalty improved.

The GE team introduced the Aurora radiology staff to Lean methods, then helped identify projects on which cross-functional teams could achieve success and build momentum.

For the first project at Aurora St. Luke’s Medical Center, the CT department identified bottlenecks causing long patient wait times and underutilization of scanners. The team designed new patient flow and staff workflow that reduced empty room time by 36 percent and increased volume on a 64-slice scanner by 27 percent (five patients per day).

As the team prepared for a second wave of projects, many more staff members and leaders from other hospitals volunteered to contribute.

**Success carries over.**

Meanwhile, Lean Tool Time sessions raised awareness of Lean throughout the radiology department and prepared staff to carry on improvements with the support of the internal process improvement team.

At Aurora West Allis Medical Center, a cross-functional team streamlined flow in the diagnostic X-ray area and used Lean principles to design layout and workflow in areas under renovation. As a result, those areas are designed to be efficient from the start.

“Process improvement is a way to partner with our staff and work on things that are important to all of us. When you fix your processes, they work better. It creates a better experience for patients and staff alike.”

Jake Nunn
Director of Metro Region Imaging Services
Aurora Health Care
Milwaukee, WI

Perform at the Next Level through Service Line Innovation.
At Aurora Sinai Medical Center, the CT and MRI department took part in Lean Kaizen events that eliminated 500 hours of non-value-added work per year and 62 miles per year of CT technologist walking.

“We're fast-tracking to achieve meaningful progress on each project within 90 days,” Nunn says. “We see value in three ways. First, improvement in our processes. Second, engagement of our staff and improving the quality of its work life. And third, growth in our ability to meet the needs of our referring physicians.”

At a glance

| Aurora St. Luke's Medical Center CT department | | Aurora Sinai Medical Center CT and MR department |
|-----------------------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| Non-value-added time for patients             | -43%                            | Non-value-added work | -500*                     |
| Empty exam room time                          | -36%                            | CT technologist walking | -62**                     |
| Patient volume on 64-slice CT                 | +27%                            |                          |                          |

*Hours/year
**Miles/year

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