

Duke HomeCare & Hospice: Embracing Continuous Improvement Principles to Dramatically Reduce Staff Turnover



Issue:

Duke HomeCare & Hospice (DHCH) leaders faced a critical challenge in unclear workflows, inefficient documentation processes, and inadequate training, contributing to staff burnout and high turnover rates.



Approach:

Leaders realized they needed to shift ownership of problems and improvements to frontline staff, actively empowering and coaching the staff in root-cause problem solving. This cultural shift established trust and autonomy. **Staff re/designed** their standard work. **Leader SW** prioritized daily staff engagement and serving as help chain. **Adapted tiered huddles** to ensure rapid communications, escalation and problem solving.



Results:

Reduced variability in practice and outcomes for implementing care plans, documenting the confirmation of quality care, patient progression, pain management and clinical outcomes and performing in-home routines.

- Nursing turnover was reduced by 50% in one year and by 75% after 2 years.
- Hospice staff identified and solved 130 problems within the first year.
- A 67% reduction in the agency's billing register, allowing for more value-added activities and timely reimbursements.



Staff Feedback:

“The main thing was getting the clinicians in the field involved in this, because they’re the ones that do the work and really have the true input of how we can make a difference.”

“Some of this work is about being willing to test things, try things, open up more dialogue, and being willing to say, ‘I don’t have the answers, but I’m willing to learn.’”

“We’re [now] a team of 380 people trying to fix this.”