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Meg Gray, Director of Critical Care Services at Citizens Baptist Medical Center

About Citizens Baptist Medical Center

Citizens Baptist Medical Center, one of five hospitals in the Brookwood Baptist Health network, is a 122-bed hospital located in Talladega, Alabama, a small, rural community located about 50 miles from Birmingham. The city is home to Talladega Superspeedway, Talladega College, and the International Motorsports Hall of Fame.

The hospital offers comprehensive services that include life-saving response times for patients with chest pain or stroke symptoms, a patient-first approach to home health and hospice care, surgical services, orthopedics and psychiatric care.



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Citizens Baptist Medical Center

Challenge

Prior to pursuing Chest Pain Center Accreditation through the Society of Cardiovascular Patient Care (now ACC Accreditation Services), the professionals at Citizens Baptist Medical Center realized that the hospital's 106-minute door-in/door-out (DIDO) time for STEMI patients was significantly longer than the established guideline of 30 minutes. Although they were aware that things needed to change, there were several hurdles to overcome.

Considering that many of the STEMI patients were being transferred to Trinity Medical Center (now Grandview Medical Center) in Birmingham for treatment in the cath lab, the length-of-stay needed to dramatically decrease. When transferring a patient, the optimal door-to-door-to-balloon (D2D2B) timeframe is 90 minutes, which includes 30 minutes at the initial hospital, 30 minutes for transport and 30 minutes at the receiving medical center.

To ensure the best-possible patient outcomes, the professionals at Citizens Baptist recognized that several things were contributing to extended length-of-stay times. This included everything from lengthy air and ground transport times to inefficient response times at the receiving hospital in Birmingham. Most of all, they knew that a solution could only occur if they committed to working together to examine the many pieces and parts that made up the process.

Solution

The professionals at Citizens Baptist implemented several protocols designed to eliminate waste and cut back on unnecessary times. It all started with a series of flow charts that helped identify where the waste was taking place. "Once you make it a focus, it helps. Everyone knew it was important to get these folks in and out, but there was no formalized goal," said Meg Gray, director of Critical Care Services at Citizens Baptist Medical Center. "Accreditation shined a light on this population of patients and why it is important to get them in and out in 30 minutes."

To begin, they created an interdisciplinary committee that consisted of ground-level participants. Rather than turning to managers and directors, they captured input from the people doing the work. Committee members were responsible for identifying their tasks and what improvements could be made in their specific areas. They also offered suggestions for improvement in other areas of the hospital.

They also worked with Trinity Medical Center (now Grandview Medical Center), to implement a one-call system, which made it possible to do ER-to-ER transfers for identified STEMI patients rather than waiting for a physician to accept the patient. This auto-accept policy allowed them to immediately start the patient transfer process. They could then simultaneously notify the receiving hospital via the one-call line and schedule the transport.

The professionals at Citizens Baptist quickly realized that little parts and pieces can really add up to make a significant difference. For instance, they put together a STEMI kit for the ICU, which included medications that were more readily accessible. They also transformed one of the ED rooms to a STEMI room, ensuring that everything they needed was at arm's reach. And when necessary, they now update the patient's medical records after he or she is on the helicopter and headed to Birmingham.

With full support from the hospital administrative team, the ER nurses were empowered to be advocates for their patients. They developed a STEMI checklist, complete with a 15-minute mark, that documented what tasks had taken place and what still needed to be done. When something wasn't happening fast enough, they did not hesitate to follow up and/or question the process.

Another important improvement involved enhancing the relationship between the hospital and its EMS providers. They identified one primary air and ground provider, and then implemented drills to determine where minutes could be shaved from the transportation process. "We learned that we need to notify our providers as early as possible—maybe five minutes after the STEMI patient arrives," Gray said. "We flow-

charted the process so we could figure out where to make changes that would impact our outcomes.” The transportation provider also agreed to respond in a more timely manner, shortening the response time from 30 minutes to 10 or 15.

Results

Once the changes were implemented, the new process went live in October of 2014. The average DIDO time for STEMI patients decreased from 106 minutes in 2013 (prior to the changes) to 93 minutes in 2014, and finally, 47 minutes in 2015. Overall, the changes helped to improve the DIDO times, which advanced patient care and decreased morbidity and mortality.

Citizens Baptist also instituted point-of-care (POC) testing for troponin to impact turnaround times for NSTEMI-ACS patients. The hospital’s initial troponin turnaround time was 84 minutes (without POC testing), but that number dropped to 46 minutes with point-of-care testing. This had a positive impact on ED throughput, transfer times, and length-of-stay in the ED.

“They did a good job of identifying their problem and taking steps to fix that problem,” said Deb Washington, an ACC accreditation review specialist. “Small hospitals can be big thinkers. They are always trying to achieve better outcomes. They take a lot of pride in what they do to provide care for the community. These communities are more connected, so these people are taking care of their neighbors and friends.”

Look to ACC Accreditation Services

Hospitals that are intent on connecting quality and cost with outcomes and patient satisfaction look to ACC Accreditation Services to transform cardiovascular care. Achieving accreditation status improves a hospital’s productivity and patient throughput with quality and consistency of care.



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