

Introduction

The St. Francis Hospital Emergency Department (ED) operates with a commitment to high-quality patient care through an interdisciplinary team approach. However, the ED faces significant challenges, primarily stemming from increased patient volumes and heightened expectations regarding quality measures. These challenges have led to issues such as prolonged boarding times, delayed ambulance turnaround, and diminished patient experience scores. Nursing leadership in collaboration with the clinical nurses in the ED and telemetry units have initiated processes to improve these issues through targeted strategies aimed at enhancing patient flow processes and improving overall care delivery. The initiatives aimed to improve turnaround times from bed to assignment to the inpatient unit, ambulance turnaround times, reduce floor times and improve patient experience.

Project Description

Project Overview: Enhanced Implementation Throughput Program for Telemetry Units at St. Francis Hospital Emergency Department

Objective

To improve patient care and streamline operations in the St. Francis Hospital Emergency Department (ED) by implementing a more efficient throughput program for patients assigned to telemetry units, with the goal of reducing the time from bed assignment in the ED to patient arrival on the telemetry unit to 60 minutes.

Background

The St. Francis Hospital ED has identified opportunities for improvement in patient throughput, particularly regarding the transition of patients from the ED to telemetry units. The current average time exceeds targeted metrics, significant implications on patient experience and operational efficiency.

In September 2023, a pilot program was initiated on telemetry unit K2, which has shown promising results. September 2024, the program expanded to all six telemetry units.

Goals

1. Reduce Time to Transfer: Achieve a bed-to-floor transfer time of 60 minutes.
2. Optimize Bed Assignment Coordination: Ensure timely bed assignments as soon as telemetry unit beds become available.
3. Streamline Transport Processes: Minimize delays by improving communication and transport logistics.
4. Enhance Communication: Utilize the EPIC SBAR system for effective patient information transfer and ensure a robust handoff process between ED and telemetry unit staff.
5. Improve EMS Turnaround: Address and reduce the ambulance turnaround times to enhance the availability of EMS resources.

Interventions

Improved Process

1. Immediate Bed Assignment Coordination:

- Upon admission decision, patients will be assigned to telemetry unit beds immediately as they become available.
- Incorporate real-time bed tracking systems to monitor availability and expedite assignments.

2. Transport Services Engagement:

- Transport services will be notified immediately after a bed is assigned, ensuring prompt transfer of patients from the ED to the telemetry unit.
- Develop standardized protocols for transport services to adhere to, minimizing unnecessary delays.

3. EPIC SBAR Utilization:

- While the patient is in route, the receiving telemetry unit will obtain a report via the EPIC SBAR system, detailing the patient's condition and care needs. An ED dot phrase was developed by ED educator and NM of telemetry unit to enhance SBAR.

- Ensure that all relevant staff are trained on the use of EPIC SBAR for seamless integration into daily operations.

4. Handoff Process:

- Upon arrival at the telemetry unit, the clinical nurse will conduct a verbal handoff with the ED clinical nurse via telephone, addressing any questions or concerns and reinforcing information shared through the EPIC SBAR.
- Implement a checklist for the handoff process to ensure all critical information is communicated.

5. Monitoring and Evaluation:

- Establish metrics to monitor the transfer times, handoff efficiency, and overall patient satisfaction.
- Conduct regular reviews of the program's effectiveness, making adjustments based on data analysis and staff feedback.

Addressing EMS Turnaround Times

To tackle the issue of high ambulance turnaround times:

1. Collaboration with EMS Providers:

- Work closely with local EMS agencies to identify bottlenecks in the transfer process and develop coordinated strategies to improve efficiency.

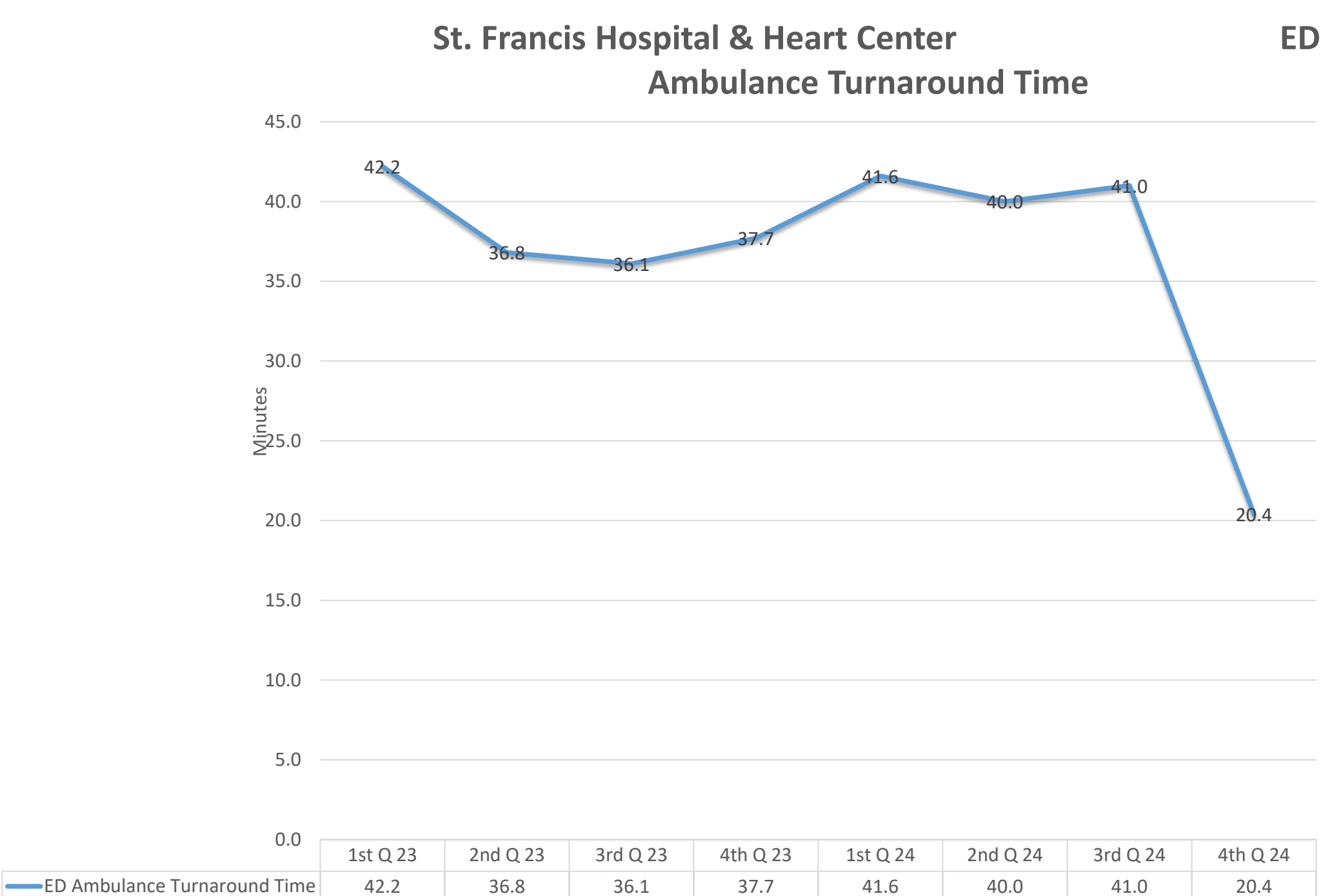
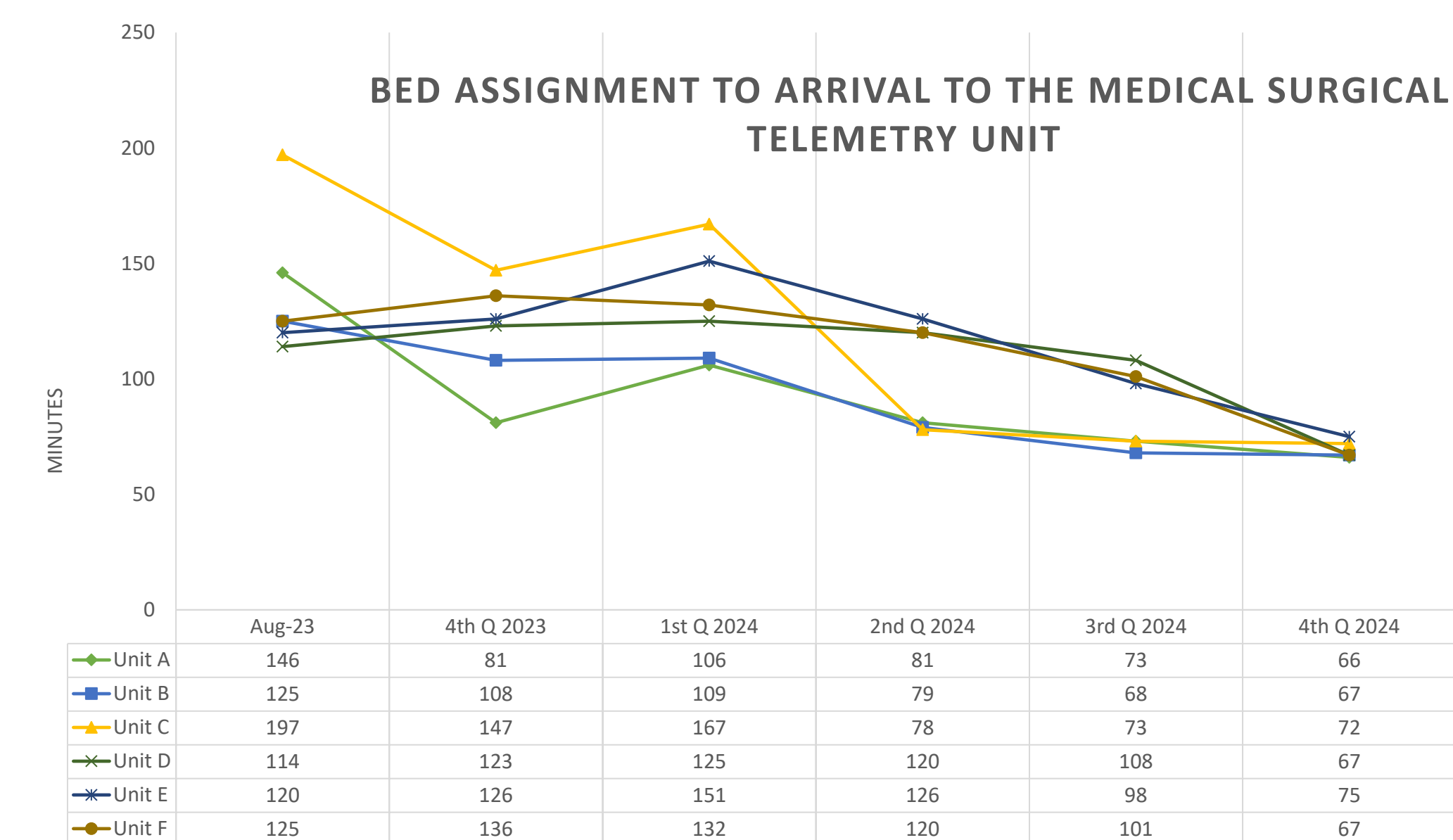
2. Dedicated ED Staff for EMS Coordination:

- Ambulance triage was relocated and redesigned to meet the needs of a rapid EMS to stretcher time.
- Assign a dedicated team to oversee ambulance arrivals and ensure rapid patient assessments and handoffs.

3. Data Analysis:

- Analyze turnaround time data to identify peak times and patterns, allowing for better staffing and resource allocation during busy periods.

Outcomes



The Enhanced Implementation Throughput Program at St. Francis Hospital aims to significantly improve the efficiency of patient transfers to telemetry units and reduce ambulance turnaround times. By optimizing bed assignments, streamlining transport processes, and enhancing communication, the program will ensure better patient care and effectively utilize EMS resources, ultimately benefiting the entire community. Regular evaluations and adjustments will be crucial for sustained success and continuous improvement.

Implications/ Conclusions

The continued improvement of the ED throughput program to achieve a 60-minute transfer time to telemetry units is a strategic initiative aimed at optimizing patient care and operational efficiency within the St. Francis Hospital ED. By enhancing coordination, communication, and transport processes, the hospital will not only improve patient flow but also foster a culture of excellence in care delivery. The successful implementation of this program across all six telemetry units by September 2024 has demonstrated a significant step towards achieving our overall goals of quality care and patient satisfaction.

Evaluation and enhancing of staffing levels in ED based on historical data to ensure adequate coverage during peak hours, thereby improving patient flow and the patient experience.

Addressing the issue of high ambulance turnaround times is essential for improving patient care and optimizing the use of EMS resources in Nassau County. By implementing targeted strategies to enhance throughput in the St. Francis Hospital Emergency Department, we can improve operational efficiency, reduce wait times, and ensure that emergency services remain readily available for the community. This throughput program serves as a roadmap for achieving these goals, fostering a culture of continuous improvement in patient care delivery.

Acknowledgement

We would like to extend our heartfelt gratitude to the dedicated team of clinical staff, nursing administration, and hospital leadership for their invaluable participation and unwavering support in our efforts to enhance patient care processes. Your commitment to excellence and collaboration has played a crucial role in identifying opportunities and implementing solutions that improve the overall patient experience.

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