

CASE STUDY

1.0 Background

Hospitals are struggling to deliver quality health care to an increasing human population. To alleviate the strain on their infrastructure, they are discharging patients to recover at home under the supervision of a health care service provider. Many patients also prefer recovery and rehabilitation in the comfort of their own homes.

2.0 The Challenge

Home healthcare organizations, such as COTA Health, connect patients discharged from hospitals with service providers within their network. Increased demand for home health care has resulted in longer wait times for patients. This project was undertaken to support COTA Health in its efforts to improve the patient experience by reducing their wait time for an available service provider.

3.0 The Solution

The primary objective of this project was to improve the patient experience by reducing their wait time for a service provider. The project team comprised of 10 core members supported by individual contributors across three facilities. The project was executed in three stages across five months.

In the first stage, the team mapped the existing process while capturing current lead time performance in a histogram. The gap between the Voice of the Customer (VOC) and the Voice of the Process (VOP) dictated the improvement required of the project.

In the second stage, the team analyzed the process and data to determine the root causes impacting lead time. They concluded that inaccurate service provider availability data was the biggest factor contributing to extended lead time.

In the third stage, the project team established a comprehensive list of software enhancements that would error-proof the entry of service provider availability. The list was provided to an IT team for development and pilot implementation.

4.0 Results

The primary objective of discovering the most significant contributor to increased patient wait time was discovered and addressed. An implementation plan for designing, executing, and managing the solution was established. Two project team members were trained to execute improvement projects of similar scope and complexity. Twelve employees were exposed to the process of Lean Six Sigma.