

Kanban seminar releases time and space in Prince Albert's Victoria Hospital

Leaders from 3sHealth had the opportunity to join the Prince Albert Parkland Health Region to implement a "Kanban" system improving the flow of materials in Victoria Hospital. Four teams made improvements to supply ordering in emergency, operating room, dialysis and surgical in-patient units.

Kanban, a Japanese term that means signboard, refers to a visual ordering system that streamlines the ordering and supply process using visual cues. The new easy-to-use card systems ensure the hospital units never run short of supplies and allow care providers to focus on patients rather than on checking and restocking materials. At the same time, the method reduces excess inventory and frees up valuable storage space. Other benefits to the system include fewer errors in deliveries, improved tracking of supplies, and improved communication between departments.

Other participants in the seminar included health care providers and supply staff from Victoria Hospital in Prince Albert, representatives from other health regions, Dan Florizone, Deputy Health Minister, and four health care supply companies. Trainers for the session were from John Black and Associates, including Shigeru Narita, a supply chain expert formerly with Toyota.

"In the space of a week, we were able to create additional time for nurses to spend with patients by eliminating the need for them to review inventory and order supplies," said 3sHealth CEO Andrew Will. "We were able to see first-hand how this process could increase efficiency and improve patient care."

The new Kanban systems were in place by the end of the week-long session, and will be audited for sustainability after 30, 60, 90 and 180 days. Each audit will provide an opportunity to identify what further improvements are needed. Kanban systems will be the foundation of supply chain improvements across the province, according to 3sHealth CEO Andrew Will. "We are excited to share what we learned this week and at previous events with other health regions so these improvements can be implemented province-wide," says Will.

As part of the provincial health system's Lean transformation initiative, this was the fourth Kanban seminar held in Saskatchewan.



From left to right: Suzanne Boudreau, Director, Materials Management; Jim Crawford, Director, Provincial Linen Services; Sensei Narita; Mark Anderson, VP, Business Development; Andrew Will, CEO; Susie Hilton, Clinical Advisor; Tony Weeks, VP, Change Management and Performance; Jill Forrester, Director, Kaizen Operations.