



Provincial Linen Service focuses on improving the patient experience

3sHealth and the health regions continue to work together to improve the quality and efficiency of Provincial Linen Service. In November, two Lean events called Rapid Process Improvement Workshops (RPIWs) were held at Tatagwa View long term care facility in Weyburn. One workshop looked at reducing rework and mistakes in the clean linen supply provided by Tatagwa View's laundry facility to the third floor of the Weyburn General Hospital. The goals of this event were to reduce required storage space, reduce steps in the delivery process and reduce the amount of rewashed linen. A second RPIW in the same facility looked at improving the flow of linen to other areas in Tatagwa View. Again, the objectives were to reduce inventory in laundry carts and resident rooms and reduce steps and time in the process. The RPIW teams consisted of Sun Country Health region staff and participants from across the province.

"The benefits achieved from the two RPIW's held in Weyburn have been sustained," says Shirley Wheeler, Regional Director of Environmental Services for the Sun Country Health Region. "The linen is there just in time and the waste has been reduced greatly which has created more linen for circulation." There needed to be some adjustments in the original improvements to get everyone on-board, but once that happened, the new system is operating well. For instance, rewash of clean linen has reduced by 80%. "Continued improvements, like Kanban, will improve inventory control and processing even further," says Wheeler.

3sHealth is also gathering information to support service improvement from a wide cross section of health care linen customers by conducting a customer survey. The survey will be asking patients, residents, health care facility staff and others questions about the current linen service in the province. It will ask people to rate the linen according to cleanliness, condition of linen and the available quantities. The survey will also ask people to determine their level of customer satisfaction in the areas of customer service and delivery of linen.

"The information that we gather from the survey will help us create a future model for linen services that ensures high quality linen, when and where it is needed, at a cost that is sustainable," says Jim Crawford, 3sHealth's Director of Provincial Linen Services. "Most importantly, we are creating province-wide standards for infection prevention and control and safe working environments for staff."

In March, two more RPIWs were held at Wascana Rehab Centre in Regina. One event focused on designing processes and standards for infection prevention and control for clean linen from the loading dock to point of use, and for the removal of dirty linen from the patient room to the truck. The objective of the other event was to increase staff efficiency by reducing walking distances and the search for supplies.

"We are counting on the experience and expertise of our customers, both patients and health region staff, to inform our work," says Crawford. "Working together, we can create long-term solutions for provincial linen services that benefits patients."