

Staff Scheduling and Standard Work Aimed at Improving Patient Care

On December 3, 2013 employee, employer, labour relations and union representatives gathered to refine the work of a visioning day held earlier this year related to staff scheduling and standard work processes.

Compensation for the healthcare sector represents approximately 70 % of a \$3 billion budget, making efficient staff scheduling critical. However, beyond being fiscally responsible, it also results in improved patient care. In a recent RPIW held in Weyburn, it was determined that patients noticed that care suffered when staff was either absent or overworked. With an appropriate life/work balance, workers were more refreshed, alert and attentive to patient needs.

The process of staff scheduling differs region by region, with both electronic and manual systems in use in various combinations. Regional procedures and practices were shared throughout the day to determine whether a standard work process could be established for all regions and whether the developed work of some regions could be replicated in other regions.

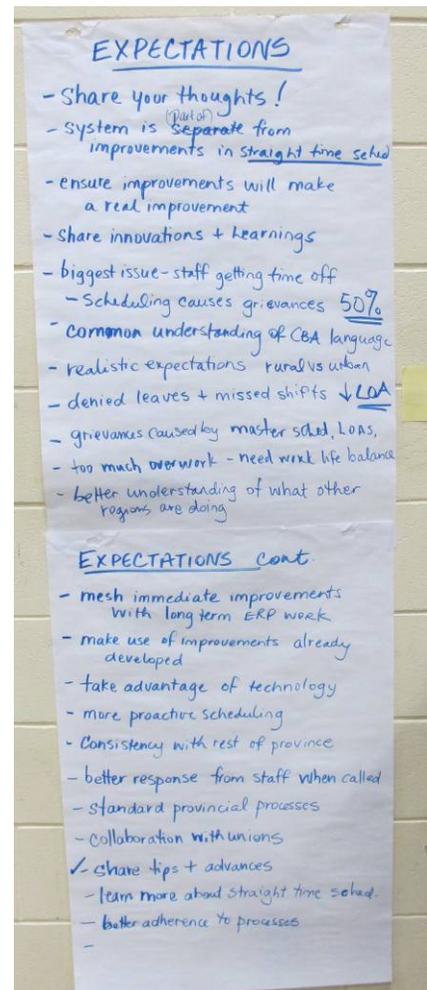
Several areas were identified as being particularly important to the process of scheduling, and targets were identified in relation to each:

Staff ability to access up-to-date schedules:

- Need consistent real-time data
- Require a transparent provincial schedule
- Connect electronically wherever possible
- Plan for a future transition to totally electronic communications

Reduce time spent placing phone calls to staff to fill relief shifts:

- Review shift differential process
- Automate phone calls or text messages
- Implement standard communications
- Build on the online scheduling developed by Saskatoon Health Region
- Engage labour unions in the conversation



Master Scheduling:

- Review relief scheduling
- Develop standards related to master scheduling (including terminology)
- Review how pay codes are used throughout the regions
- Involve IT in discussions about automating processes

Leave of Absence Requests:

- Reduce time spent by Managers processing requests
- Develop both standardized forms and a standard flow for Leave of Absence requests
- Managers set the mandate for required staffing

Greater Flexibility for Staff to Select Shifts:

- Explore some self-scheduling in accordance with Collective Bargaining Agreements, while ensuring patient and employee safety with appropriate staffing

Work Record Authorization (WRA) Process and Flow Sheets:

- Review the need for daily sign-off on flow sheets
- Explore the possibility of ensuring a checkpoint within scheduling to officially record employee absence from work



Moving Forward

Over the next few weeks the results of the day will be compiled and reviewed by JoAnn Collum, Director of Information Management, 3sHealth, and distributed to participants. Teams of interested participants will be formed to move the plan forward with the continued assistance of 3sHealth’s Kaizen Operations and Change Leadership teams.



Kendell Arndt, Vice-President, Strategic Information and Corporate Services, who is the project sponsor of this event, thanked everyone for participating and making the extra effort to attend in spite of the inclement weather and driving conditions.