

November 12, 2015

Collaborating to improve supply management

This fall the continuous improvement team within the Ministry of Justice and Pine Grove Correctional Centre in Prince Albert partnered with 3sHealth to significantly improve in how the facility orders and manages its supplies.

Before the week-long kaizen event, which took place September 28 to October 2, the facility did not have a clear and documented process to order supplies or check orders for accuracy. Many supplies were kept in quantities that far exceeded what was actually needed at the facility; other products used more frequently were often not in stock and available for nurses to use when administering care.

As well, the supplies that were kept on site were located in a basement storage room that was hard to get to and move around in. The room was also poorly organized, which made it hard to find the right product the nurse was looking for. The basement storage room is far away from the point of care, which meant nurses had to travel unnecessarily to retrieve supplies.



Pictured (L-R): Janice Wilby (continuous improvement consultant with Ministry of Corrections), Kelly Thompson (3sHealth), Tara Felix (registered nurse), Mary Tartarynovich (nursing unit manager with Pine Grove Correctional Centre), and Lina Saavedra (registered nurse)

Kelly Thompson, who works as a kaizen specialist at 3sHealth, participated in the event and said, “We found lots of expired products down there and large unused inventories. We were able to reduce that inventory by 1,000 pieces and moved the stock that remained up to the clinic room, so it is at point of use.

“We also implemented a new ordering process for re-stocking the facility with medical supplies from Victoria Hospital and a signaling system called *kanban* to indicate how and when supplies need to be re-ordered and where those supplies are stored.”

“These improvements will help ensure optimal client care,” said Mary Tartarynovich, nursing unit manager. “By implementing the *kanban* system, our team will have all products readily on hand.

November 12, 2015

This will allow for more time for client care as we won't have to waste time looking for items in multiple places only to find the product we're looking for may be expired and of no use."

Janice Wilby and Obeyaa Ampofo-Addo, who work as Lean leaders with the corrections and policing continuous improvement team within the Ministry of Justice said, "We value the partnership with 3sHealth and appreciated the opportunity to learn about *kanban*. We are excited to replicate this work in our other facilities and apply the lessons that were learned as we move forward."

By the end of the event, the team had:

- Reduced the amount of space taken up by existing inventory by 98 per cent (going from 203 square feet of storage space before the event to only 5 square feet of storage space needed in the basement room post-event);
- Reduced the number of storage shelves used by 93 per cent (going from 73 shelves down to 5);
- Eliminated 67 per cent of non-essential stock on hand (as it was either expired or unneeded product, going from 1,534 pieces of inventory down to 503 pieces of inventory);
- Reduced the distance that staff had to walk to retrieve supplies by 83 per cent (going from 120 feet pre-event down to 21 feet post-event);
- Reduced the time it takes to order and re-stock supplies by 75 per cent (going from more than three hours pre-event to less than 49 minutes post-event); and
- Eliminated five health and safety hazards, which included (1) expired items on the shelf; (2) broken insulation above sterile medical supplies; (3) unused medical equipment leaning against a wall; (4) heavy medical supplies being stored on top shelves; and (5) supplies stored in a room with potential for flooding.

Having a healthcare organization and a correction facility team up to make these sorts of improvements is unprecedented and proved to be a highly successful experience. The improvements that were made will enhance both patient care and make the provider experience much safer going forward.