



# CAP and Work-Out

## THE ORGANIZATION

*Since 2005, Mercy Medical Center in Des Moines, IA, has used Six Sigma® and Lean to improve clinical and business processes. In recent years, two new tools have helped the teams that lead the initiatives to accomplish more and win support from the people affected by process changes.*

## RESULTS

- Reducing patient cancellations at a family practice clinic on the hospital campus from 25 percent to 11 percent, generating \$52,000 in additional revenue in less than a year
- Improving workflow in the main laboratory to enable closure of a stand-alone stat lab in the emergency department, saving \$287,000 per year
- Installing processes to ensure proper coding of cervical fusion procedures for billing to Medicare, capturing \$304,000 in reimbursements

## Completing the tool kit for process improvement

Process improvements drive financial and patient care results, but do they have to take so long? A single project can take months. And why is change so stressful? Making change last seems like a constant uphill struggle. There must be a way to finish projects faster and show people how new processes enhance patient service and make work life better.

Since 2005, Mercy Medical Center in Des Moines, IA, has used Six Sigma® and Lean to improve clinical and business processes. In recent years, two new tools have helped the teams that lead the initiatives to accomplish more and win support from the people affected by process changes.

Work-Out and the Change Acceleration Process (CAP), methods taught by GE Healthcare Camden Group, have helped Mercy Medical staff complete improvement projects with some \$6 million in benefits. Work-Out brings people from all sides of a process together for an intensive, one-day session to identify better ways of working together and creating action plans to implement these ideas. CAP provides leaders a comprehensive set of tools to quickly mobilize teams and generate enthusiasm around a change initiative.

CAP and Work-Out are now part of training for all new black belts and green belts, says Jeff Jutting, master black belt at Mercy Medical, part of the Catholic Health Initiatives (CHI) system. Successful projects that used the two methods include:

- Reducing patient cancellations at a family practice clinic on the hospital campus from 25 percent to 11 percent, generating \$52,000 in additional revenue in less than a year
- Improving workflow in the main laboratory to enable closure of a stand-alone stat lab in the emergency department, saving \$287,000 per year
- Installing processes to ensure proper coding of cervical fusion procedures for billing to Medicare, capturing \$304,000 in reimbursements



Jutting notes that, before Work-Out, most improvement projects used the Six Sigma DMAIC method. “What our staff and directors like about Work-Out is that it’s quick,” he says. “Now, about 85 percent of our projects are Work-Out sessions, 10 percent are DMAIC and 5 percent are full-blown Lean projects.

“We find that the key to Work-Out is to incorporate a primary metric for every project. That makes us more successful, because we have a data point we can feed back to the team members to give them a sense of the impact they’re having.”

Meanwhile, CAP is part of the foundation for every improvement project. “We integrate it with our Six Sigma, Lean and Work-Out methodologies,” Jutting says. “It’s an effective way of thinking about and driving change. It makes us think about where the various stakeholders are with respect to each change opportunity. It has really facilitated the organization’s willingness to take part in process improvement work.”

Education and training on CAP and Work-Out was delivered at Mercy Medical by CHI’s change leadership master change agents. The aim of CHI’s master change agents, who were developed by GE, is to provide leadership education, training and development around GE’s CAP and Work-Out approaches.

*“We have engaged our executive team in being part of process improvement work. We also have empowered our black belts and trained them in CAP and Work-Out. The combination of the two helps make them expert facilitators with a full tool bag for leading people through change initiatives.”*

### **Dan Varnum**

Vice President, Performance Improvement  
Mercy Medical Center  
Des Moines, IA