

A Linen Improvement Project

Case study

Overview

Experiencing increases in linen usage and inefficiencies in the linen process, Melbourne Health created a project to improve their linen service. The aim of the project was to decrease linen usage and expenditure while maintaining high-quality linen supply to patients.

Summary

Linen is an essential element of service delivery in health services that helps maintain good patient care and infection control standards. Inefficient linen supply can be frustrating for staff and impact significantly on workflow.

The major improvements included:

- fewer linen items used from 71,968 (\$45,338) to 70,800 (\$42,922)
- a reduced error margin in order versus supply from 27 per cent to three per cent
- fewer hoarded linen items from 1,110 to 800 items (eight wards).

Key changes

- Monthly reporting of linen use provided to nurse unit managers
- Developed a linen toolkit including an Imprest review, education pack for managers and Imprest review schedule
- Revised delivery dockets
- Regular linen trolley audits
- Regular linen hoarding audits
- Established a standard for bed changing
- Established a process for identifying and isolating defective linen

What worked well

- Strong executive commitment
- Clear operational definitions
- A unique marketing strategy to raise the profile of the project
- Observing the linen process in the wards and with the supplier

What could be improved

- Strong engagement is essential for sustainability.

Health service involved

Melbourne Health

Project name

Between the Sheets: A Linen Improvement Project

Date of completion

December 2010

Key indicator

Cost savings

Change in performance

Reduced number of hoarded linen items from 1,110 to 800 items (across eight wards)

Established financial benefit

At close of project – \$183,112

Patient experience

Improving the linen supply for more timely delivery of care

To receive this publication in an accessible format email bcv@dhhs.vic.gov.au

Authorised and published by the Victorian Government, 1 Treasury Place, Melbourne. © State of Victoria, Department of Health and Human Services, September 2016. ISBN 978-0-7311-7061-6. Available at www.bettercare.vic.gov.au.