

Unit 2 Assignment Case Study: The Case of the Belated Lab Test

Disclaimer: The organization and characters depicted in this exercise are fictional. Any resemblance to real organizations or individuals is purely coincidental.

Introduction: College Community Hospital (CCH) is a 200 bed facility offering adult medical, surgical, orthopedic, and psychiatric care. The hospital provides a full range of diagnostic and therapeutic services, including CT and MRI scanning and an eight bed intensive care unit. The 200 beds are distributed over six inpatient floors:

- 3A Acute Medicine
- 3B Diagnostic Medicine
- 3C Intensive Care
- 4A Acute Psychiatry
- 4B Orthopedics
- 4C General Surgery

One year ago, faced with decreased patient and staff satisfaction and rising costs, the management of CCH adopted a Total Quality Management strategy. They formed a Quality Council and chartered several performance improvement projects. Over a 9 month period, projects were successfully completed in Dietary, Nursing, Psychiatry, Materials Management, Pharmacy, Health Information, and Outpatient Surgery, they are now ready to begin a second round of projects.

One major source of dissatisfaction for physician and nursing staff has been slow turnaround time (TAT) for laboratory tests. The lab performs about 3000 blood tests per week, the most common being CBC (complete blood count), serum electrolytes (sodium, potassium, chloride, and CO₂), BUN, a kidney function test, and blood sugar.

Given the high level of complaints about slow lab test turn-around time, the Assistant Administrator asked the Quality Council to initiate a Performance Improvement (PI) project team to tackle the problem of improving the number of tests completed within the hospital standard. The Quality Council agreed, chartered a team, and asked the Assistant Administrator to act as Team Leader.

The Assistant Administrator was familiar with Total Quality Management concepts and recruited a team, including the Transport Supervisor, who had recently attended a class in PI Methods and Tools. When all the recruiting was done, the team members were:

- Lotta Paper, Assistant Administrator – Team Leader
- Tom Trotter, Transport Supervisor – Quality Advisor
- Beth Harrast, Floor Secretary, 3A
- Harry Hiteck, Day Supervisor, Lab
- Sam Drawit, Day Phlebotomist
- Steve Spinner, Evening Lab Tech
- Cathy Filer, Health Information Management

Problems with scheduling the team meetings made it impossible to include a representative from the lab night shift.