Background/Problem

- Factors adversely affecting timely bed assignment to appropriate care units:
  - Inefficient bed assignment workflow
  - Poor communication between nursing and support services
  - No effective method for escalating resources when system bed needs reached critical limits

Goals / Objectives

- Develop an efficient and expeditious Emergency Department (ED) throughput without compromising patient safety or patient experience:
  - Reduce throughput time from ED bed order to bed ready on nursing unit
  - Improve communication among ED, Bed Assignment, and Environmental Services

Processes Addressed

- Nursing and business development leader joined forces to identify options for improving access for regional transfer patients. The root cause was found to be poor patient throughput.
- An interprofessional team was formed to study the intake process for patients entering the two acute care hospitals. The IP team discovered high variability in workflow from bed request in the ED to patient transport to the nursing unit.
- Out-of-the-box thinking resulted in the formation of a central bed assignment center with a clinical nurse orchestrating system bed management.
- Leveraged technology to standard workflow criteria to assign beds, activate system alerts and facilitate conference call huddles on high demand days.
- Developed unit action plans and standardized handoff communication between nurses and support services to allow timely responses to high bed demands and decreased delays in ED throughput.

Outcomes

- There was a statistically significant 18.2% decrease in average time from ED bed order to arrival time on nursing unit.
- Assignments met the 30-minute goal for clean beds improved 32% in 8-months.
- An 18.5% growth was achieved in regional transfer admissions.

Implications for Practice

- Collaboration between nursing and support leaders is key to focusing practice strategies on efficiencies without sacrificing patient-centered care.
- Quality processes built on standard work, effective technology, and communication improved system bed assignments through efficiencies to decrease ED admission delays.