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Lean Tools to Improve Staff Efficiency in the Healthcare Industry - A Case Study

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Abstract: Since the successful implementation of Lean tools in the manufacturing sector, practitioners have been able to replicate similar success stories in the service sector. Hospitals and health care units have recognized the need to provide quality service to its customers in an increasingly competitive environment at lower costs. This has accelerated the need to implement Lean tools in order to reduce waste, remove inefficiencies and minimize non-value added elements. Gaps in quality, safety, equity, and access characterize our health care system. At the same time, rising health care costs affect employers and payers as well as patients and hospitals and health systems. Policymakers, private payers, and system leaders are looking for ways to reduce waste, increase the efficiency of health care delivery, and allocate resources to improve value in health care. And the patients or "the consumers" want to maximize the value of their own health care dollar. Hospitals across the United States are beginning to embrace Lean and Six Sigma business management strategies in attempts to reduce costs and improve productivity. This paper briefly discusses the use of Lean tools in health care sector and provides a case study where the Lean techniques were used to improve the staff efficiency in a healthcare center.

Keywords: Lean, Health Care, Staff Efficiency, Case Study, 5S