

News

DeKalb Medical Center at Hillandale achieves record Emergency Department satisfaction scores

Even with an influx of flu patients and higher than normal volume, the Emergency Department (ED) at DeKalb Medical Center's Hillandale campus has managed to log its highest score ever in the prompt treatment of patients.

The August 2009 patient satisfaction survey conducted by DeKalb Emergency Physicians shows a 90% satisfaction rate with how quickly patients were seen and treated. Other exemplary patient satisfaction scores included: courtesy of physicians, 93%, courtesy of nurses, 94%, and quality of care, 88%.

Maintaining quality despite increased ED volume

Despite the H1N1 flu surge, how did the ED maintain such high quality under crisis? Interim Nurse Manager, Jannet Edison Southerland, says the team had to think "outside of the box" when volumes jumped from an average of 130 patients per day to 200 – many of whom had high fevers and needed to be isolated. "We relocated the Clinical Decision Unit to another floor and moved our urgent care unit next to the ED to improve throughput," says Southerland.

There were a lot of processes that played into the great scores according to Southerland. Nurses made sure to acknowledge and introduce themselves to patients and communicate any potential delays in care. They also worked extra shifts and added staff to handle demand. "Since July, our focus has been on reducing the amount of time patients spend in the ED and the number of people who leave the hospital without being treated," adds Southerland whose team's successes have been celebrated with a Service Excellence Award.

Since 2005, DeKalb Medical has been in partnership with CEP America, one of the largest providers of emergency department management and staffing solutions in the nation. What has made DeKalb's ED so successful in recent years is CEP America's proactive approach to emergency care. The team of emergency physicians and staff has developed several programs to reduce Time to Provider (TTP), and improve patient satisfaction at DeKalb's Hillandale campus; resulting in much improved patient survey scores.