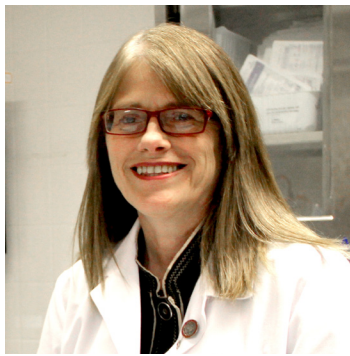


EDHeroes

PROFILES



Everyday EDHero

Liz Kelley

NURSE MANAGER
CAPE COD HOSPITAL

"Liz brings a lot of special knowledge to the ER," says Mason. "She's managing a unit built to handle 60,000 visits annually, yet the staff sees more than 90,000 patients a year."



EDHeroes Profile: Liz Kelley

Using data to create a collaborative culture

Ask Pamela Mason to name the hero of her hospital's emergency unit and she'll answer in an instant. As senior EDIS Analyst at Cape Cod Hospital (CCH) in Hyannis, Mass., Mason keeps a close eye on the daily whirl of traffic through the hospital's emergency center—and on the traffic conductors as well. Her top choice for everyday ER heroism: Liz Kelley, the center's nurse manager.

"Liz brings people together," says Mason. "She's a wizard at analyzing data. She helps bring issues into focus so that we can consider how to improve as a team."

Kelley came to nursing after a career in banking and real estate, a history that may explain her adept hand with data. "Liz brings a lot of special knowledge to the ER," says Mason. "She's managing a unit built to handle 60,000 visits annually, yet the staff sees more than 90,000 patients a year."

Those numbers make the ER at CCH—one of Cape Cod Healthcare's two hospitals—the busiest in Massachusetts. They also pose a challenge for Kelley: How can a strained ER keep pace with demand without sacrificing care quality or staff morale? Kelley's answer has been to promote a culture of collaboration in the ER—the model often considered the best incubator for innovation.

"Liz brings a lot of special knowledge to the ER," says Mason. "She's managing a unit built to handle 60,000 visits annually, yet the staff sees more than 90,000 patients a year."

Bringing issues into focus

Figuring out how to connect with her collaborators took some time. When a work team is spread across three shifts over seven days, keeping its members informed and invested can be confounding. Ultimately Kelley did what circumstances required: “She came up with The Top 10 Bed Huddle,” says Mason, “a newsletter she sends out every Sunday night—sometimes even when she’s on vacation.”

Complete with cartoons (many of them laced with “warped ER humor,” Mason confides), the newsletter goes out to every nurse, doctor, front line staff member and


administrator connected with the ER—delivering weekly updates on happenings in the unit, including how we are performing against our core initiatives. Many staffers read it avidly, perhaps because it’s more than an announcement bulletin. Kelley uses The Top 10 Bed Huddle to share the inside story about ER performance, offering her readers fresh insight about how to help the unit succeed.

“Liz serves up data in a consumable way,” explains Mason, “and there’s a pattern to her publications. For example, if it’s the first Sunday of a new month, the lead article of

The Top 10 Bed Huddle will focus on stats. She’ll report on last month’s quickest disposition and longest length of stay. She gathers statistics that point out areas of strength as well as gaps and opportunities we might not otherwise see.”



Founded in 1920 in Hyannis, MA, as of 2011 Cape Cod Hospital is the largest hospital on Cape Cod.



Liz Kelley’s many abilities—which include serving up insights in an easy-to-read, sharable manner; gathering the right voices to the table; emphasizing and tracking our activities that can impact the Press Ganey scores—help us make the changes we need to serve our growing volume of patients, with better quality and greater efficiency.



Enabling cross-team collaboration

It’s a rare ER manager who launches a publishing enterprise to galvanize change, but Kelley has done precisely that. Week after week, *The Top 10 Bed Huddle* highlights numbers that matter—from patient-satisfaction scores to throughput times—fueling conversation within the ER about how to make the numbers better.

For Kelley, of course, facilitating dialogue isn’t a once-a-week venture, but a daily preoccupation.

“Upon recognizing a problem,” Mason says, “Liz will bring in people from other departments—nurses, managers and front line staff members—to help us brainstorm. She makes sure all needed perspectives and all the right people are in the room.” And once resolution is reached, says Mason, Kelley shares the process with her entire team: “She tracks all the stats and all the problem-solving in *The Top 10 Bed Huddle*.”



Helping us continually improve our performance

One of Kelley's key tools for keeping the ER up-to-speed is Optum's ED PulseCheck. Kelley credits the platform for driving down ER wait times and propelling the hospital's patient-satisfaction scores to the top of the national list. Those achievements are heartening, but Kelley remains keen to see what else ED PulseCheck can do. She often mines the system for data on ER performance. Kelley has even used it to address an ER predicament thought to be intractable.

Like many emergency centers, the unit at CCH has long been a landing place for people suffering from serious mental illness. Finding open psychiatric-care beds can take hours or even days. In times past the hospital's ER team had little choice but to let these beleaguered visitors wait out the search hovering in busy hallways.

"For years we said we needed a separate area for these people," Pamela Mason says. "We just weren't able to do anything."

That was before Kelley delved into the ED PulseCheck database and came away with proof of how many underserved there actually were. "When you're looking for money to build something," Mason observes, "you need the numbers to make the case. Liz pulled the stats and went to the administration and said, 'Look how many people are in the hallways. They're not getting a quiet moment or any privacy. We're not meeting their needs.'"

The administrators agreed, and the hospital opened the ER's nine-bed "purple zone"—a secure, private unit reserved for the care and protection of unstable psychiatric patients awaiting longer-term placement and staffed with psychiatric APRN's. Kelley used ED PulseCheck to track the purple-zone patients

separately from other ER visitors and developed customized reporting templates within the system for documenting their special care.

Today, the purple zone is full—proof, if more were

Liz often mines the system for data on ER performance. Kelley has even used it to address an ER predicament thought to be intractable.

needed, that the CCH emergency unit has outgrown its quarters. Fortunately, ED PulseCheck is primed to manage this overflow: When new psychiatric patients arrive on the ER doorstep, ED PulseCheck assigns them to "virtual purple beds" and tracks their care wherever in the hospital they end up.

Yet the "virtual purple" era won't last long, for Liz Kelley's quiet heroism and compelling case-making seem to have helped produced another happy ending: The hospital has just broken ground on a major expansion to its emergency center.



Positive results: Cape Cod breaks ground on a new expanded emergency center.