

Providing exemplary access to care through a patient-centered culture

In 2008, Bluewater Health was facing several challenges. Employees lacked trust in the organization, and physicians and staff were frustrated. The senior leadership team set out to make big changes, which have made Bluewater Health a shining example of how a patient-centered culture can contribute to making exceptional access to care available to all patients.

CULTURAL CHANGE

Leadership at Bluewater Health first wanted to create changes in the workplace environment. To do that, they reached out directly to employees via an engagement survey. The survey results helped identify the three most important improvements to be made to workplace culture. Units then appointed ambassador teams from among employees to communicate with leadership and drive these improvements.

By listening to its employees and creating a feedback structure that continues to draw on their input, Bluewater Health gave those employees an active voice, and held them accountable for implementing changes.

Bluewater Health also implemented the practice of Appreciative Inquiry to positively recognize and reinforce desired behaviors among its employees. In addition, the organization's reward structure was aligned with goal outcomes to further support these priorities and actions.

INTENTIONAL PROCESSES

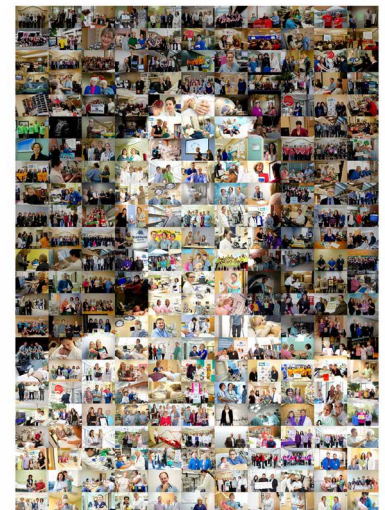
The workflow of physicians and healthcare providers is strategically structured to allow for a deeper connection with patients, who see fewer doctors and nurses during their stay as a result. Hospitalists meet daily to facilitate consistent communication

about treatment, and informal lunchtime discussions allow for best practices to be shared and evaluated. Special focus is placed on ensuring that patients receive the resources that they need and that communication happens seamlessly between all clinicians on each patient's care-provider team.

PATIENT-CENTERED MINDSET

Bluewater Health has nurtured the development of a patient-centered culture by introducing the concept of Emily to represent the patients and family members Bluewater Health has cared for and continues to care for in the past, present, and future. The concept brings a patient perspective and greater focus to the work of physicians, staff, and administrators. Emily is represented by a photographic composite that is present during all meetings and encourages attendees to consider, "What would Emily say and do if she were here?" driving deeper questions and dialogue among the team.

Bluewater Health has also implemented a Patient Experience Partner Council consisting of volunteers and past patients and family members. The council provides a patient perspective to hospital initiatives and activities, and ensures the patient voice, is well represented.



For Emily... every time.

About Bluewater Health

- 326-bed community hospital
- nearly 2,500 staff, physicians, and volunteers.
- provides an array of specialized acute, complex continuing care, allied health, and ambulatory care services.

The Bluewater Health mission:

Create exemplary healthcare experiences for patients and families, every time.