

Reducing Waste in Supply Rooms Through Clinical Collaboration

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Learning Objectives

- Identify the eight “wastes” within the Lean process improvement model.
- Describe strategies to reduce waste in supply rooms.

Background

In an ever changing and challenging healthcare environment, how do you reduce waste and cut costs, while creating streamlined workflows for all staff to support safe patient care?

In Supply Chain, waste reduction can be in the form of less touches to maintain and distribute supplies, reducing unused/slow moving items, managing FIFO (first in, first out)/turning inventory, and space optimization.

Utilizing Lean principles, we embarked on a journey of continuous improvement to reduce waste in our Inpatient and Emergency Department supply rooms, with a goal of a 25% reduction in the number of daily PAR (Periodic Automatic Replenishment) bin touches. While improving our standard work and methodology to maintain PAR locations, we partnered with nurses and clinical managers upfront and continue to do so on our journey toward a clinically integrated supply chain. Point-of-use technology options such as a weighted bin system to trigger demand or real-time-locating-system (RTLS) to track mobile supply chart locations for restocking was out of scope for this project.

Our philosophy during this project was that one does not need to spend a large amount of money to gain significant improvement.

Objectives

- 25% reduction in the number of PAR (Periodic Automatic Replenishment) bin touches
- Revamp our standard work and methodology to manage PAR locations
- Don't expect the “perfect process” – expect a “better process” than what you have today!

Lean Improvement Tools

Kanban – visual signal

- Flip bin, when front compartment is empty, users flip bin around to access second compartment. (This supports FIFO)
- Bin quantities setup based on package size and usage and trend data
- Bin sized to support a minimum of 3 days of supply in each half
- Empty bin compartments create visual signal for Supply Chain to restock

Go to Gemba (Workplace)

- We have all seen it before, what is occurring is different than what people tell you is happening. This is why the Lean concept of Go to the Gemba is so important in a process improvement activity, which ensures your countermeasures are addressing what is truly happening. You also have an opportunity to hear from the people who do the daily work and see firsthand the opportunities for improvement
- Spaghetti charting is a method to track the movement/motion waste in a process. Which helped identify a need to consolidate two small supply rooms into one centrally located supply room to reduce the wasted movement by nurses visiting multiple supply rooms. It also reduced the time for Supply Chain technicians to restock the department.

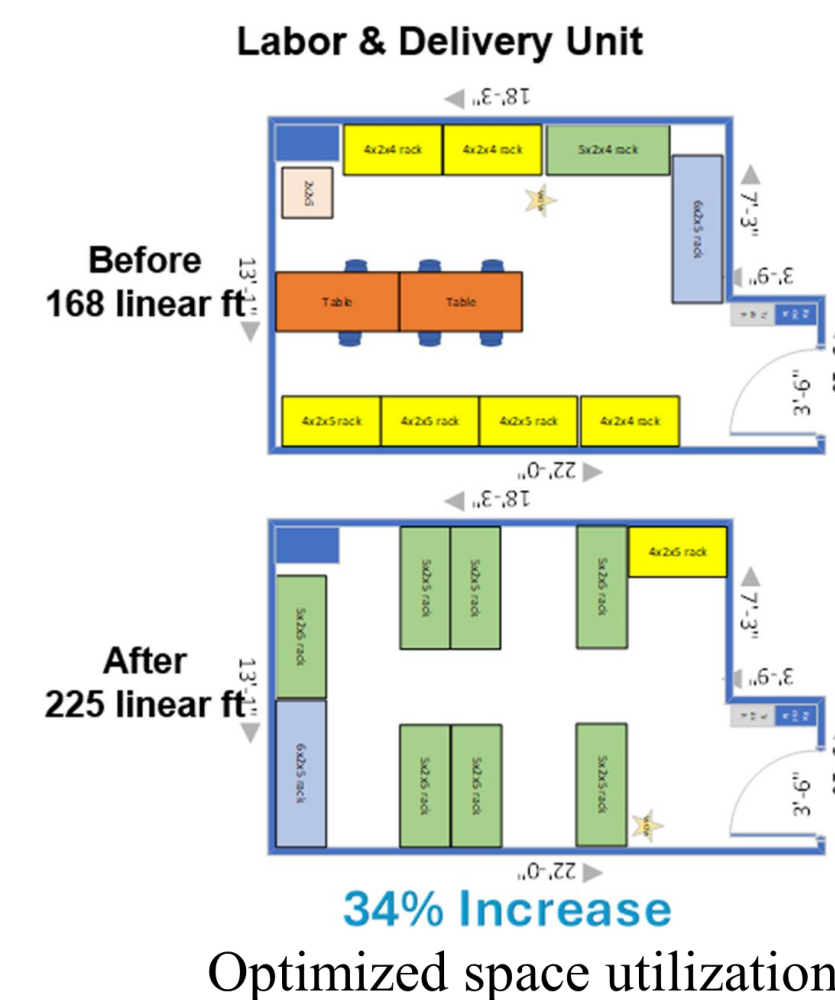
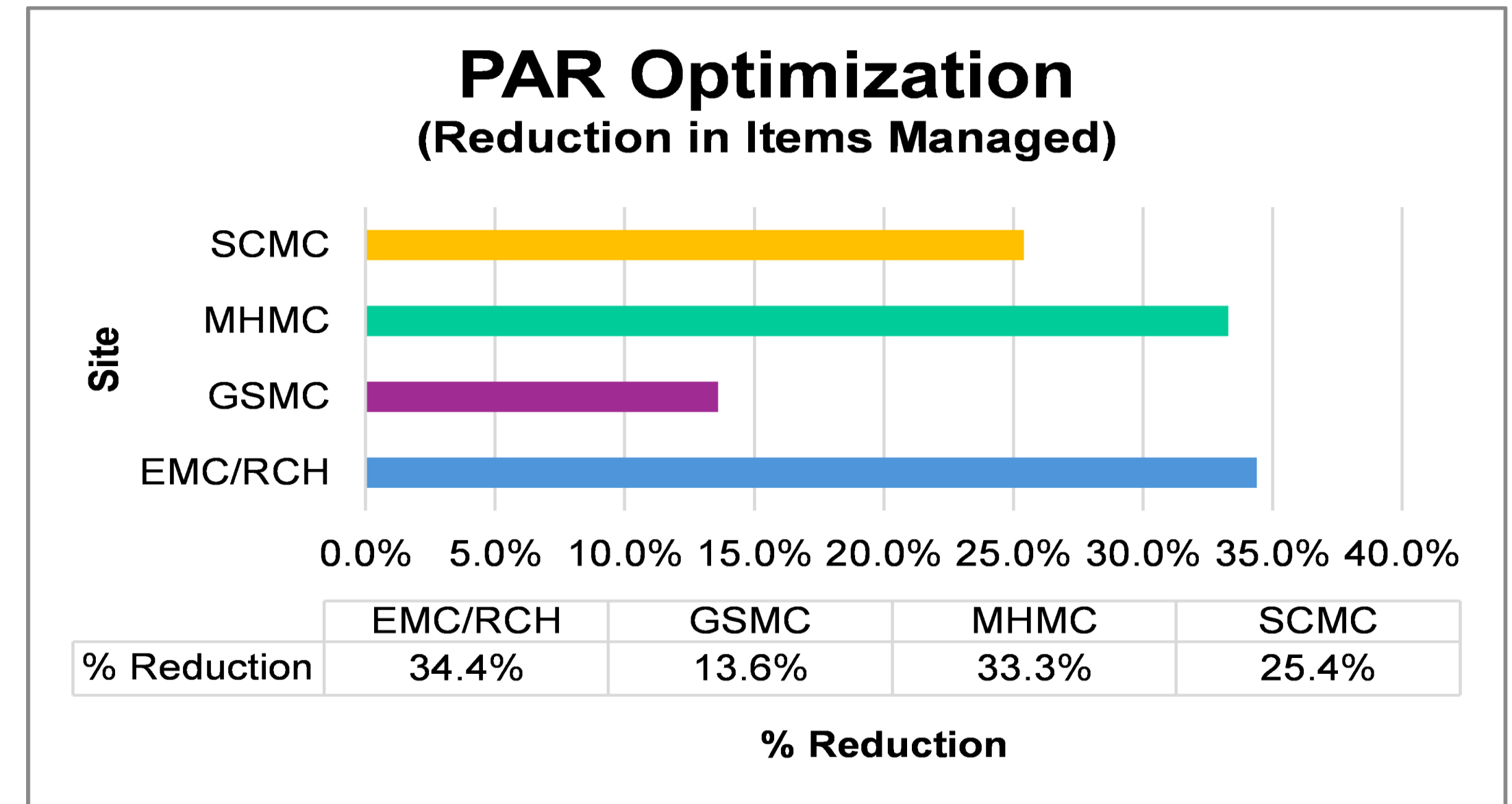
Wastes

- Defects
- Over Production
- Waiting
- Non-utilized Talent
- Transportation
- Inventory
- Motion
- Extra Processing

PDCA

- Plan
- Do
- Check
- Adjust

Results



Lessons Learned

- Let the data lead you
- Involve your customers upfront
- Challenge old assumptions and check and adjust as necessary
- Have a mindset to focus not on the “perfect” solution, but on something better than today will help you continue to improve and move forward.

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