

BIG CARIBBEAN BUSINESS PROFILES

HEALTHCARE, HOSPITALS & LABS



PRiMEX promotes lean healthcare to improve care and cut costs

BY B.G. DOYLE

While lean manufacturing is a concept that is widely known and practiced throughout manufacturing sectors, the idea of lean healthcare has yet to really take hold—especially in Puerto Rico. According to Carla M. López, a lean healthcare-certified industrial engineer at Puerto Rico Manufacturing Extension Inc. (PRiMEX), this is unfortunate.

“Here in Puerto Rico, most healthcare providers are not aware of the importance of lean healthcare—not just for cutting costs, but primarily for improving patient care,” she said. “We are trying to convince them that they need to take another look at this concept.”

As a nonprofit consulting group that specializes in providing cost-effective technical assistance and technology transfer to businesses of

all types and sizes in Puerto Rico, PRiMEX helps companies streamline their operations and improve the efficiency and agility of their processes through cost-reduction strategies, which includes the reduction of non value-added activities. López said that her organization’s services are open to the entire healthcare sector, including hospitals, emergency rooms, clinics, laboratories, those in private offices and health insurers.

When asked why lean healthcare is so crucial for the local healthcare community, López pointed out that currently the healthcare defect rate in the U.S. (including providers in Puerto Rico) has gone as high as 45%.

“According to statistics, 500 incorrect surgical procedures are performed each week and 50 newborn babies are dropped during birth per day,” she said.



Carla M. López, lean healthcare-certified industrial engineer, Puerto Rico Manufacturing Extension Inc. (PRiMEX)

Other problems include mixing up or losing patient records, administering the wrong tests and medications, allowing patients to fall as the result of poor supervision, nursing shortages and making patients wait for hours on end in emergency rooms, on gurneys and in examination areas.

“For every dollar spent on healthcare, 75% goes to non-patient care activities such as registering, scheduling, admitting, documenting, communicating, coordinating, supervising, waiting and all that,” she said. “None of that adds value to the patient, and many people are beginning to question whether it’s a good idea to go to a hospital or just stay in their homes, given that they have to wait hours and hours to receive proper care.”

Focused on reducing non value-added activities, lean healthcare not only reduces the chance for error, but greatly improves the process flow and use of resources for both the external customer (the patient) and the internal as well.

“If lean healthcare is implemented, an organization can reduce operational costs up to 80%, improve work and patient flow, and improve productivity and employee performance,” she said. ■

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¿Necesita convertir sus procesos en unos ágiles, eficientes, productivos y de alta calidad?

Participe del único taller en Puerto Rico con simulación:

Lean Healthcare 10 de junio de 2010



HORA: 8:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m.
LUGAR: Asociación de Industriales Guaynabo, Puerto Rico
OFERTA INTRODUCTORIA \$195.00
COSTO: \$295.00
 Educación Continua Asociación de Hospitales (Proveedor #00041)
 (8 horas \$50 adicionales)
 Facilitador: Ing. Rafael León,
 Lean Healthcare Certified, CSSBB

- Participe en una simulación - en la que comparará un ambiente de servicios médicos tradicional vs. uno productivo.
- Identifique áreas de mejoras a aplicarse en cualquier ambiente de servicios de salud.
- Establezca el flujo actual de los procesos e identifique mejores procesos que los actuales.
- Reducirá costos operacionales hasta un 60%.
- Reduzca defectos y errores.
- Aumente la capacidad de producir sin aumentar recursos.
- Mejore la moral de su grupo de trabajo.
- Aumente la satisfacción del cliente, pacientes y familiares.

