



Hospital System Dramatically Improves Sterile Processing Performance Helped by See to Solve Alert™

Fast Problem Reporting, Root Cause Analysis and Remediation Combine to Avert Risk, Stabilize SPD and Deliver Successful Continuous Improvement

“See to Solve Alert gave us easy problem reporting and a simple but meaningful ‘big board’ view of what was happening in the Sterile Processing area. We could see at a glance where issues were happening.

The power is in its simplicity. We all know how to take a picture, type a few words, send it, done.”

— **Senior Director, Center for Innovation and Transformational Change**

The Challenge:

Sterile Processing Department Needs Fast Improvement

In the Fall of 2019, a large health care system that includes four outstanding hospitals and the region's only academic medical center found it was having trouble with its Sterile Processing work. In fact, the performance of the Sterile Processing Department was a critical concern. The department had been experiencing equipment failures and other issues on a regular basis and was having a tough time meeting all the standards. With a JCAHO accreditation visit coming up and surveys of the area indicating a possibility of failure, the Senior Director of the system's Center for Innovation and Transformational Change, convened a team to focus on improvement.

Gemba walks immediately highlighted key areas of concern. First was delayed reporting of issues. "There was a certain resistance when it came to reporting issues in the corporate systems," the director explains. "It's not that hard to use, but people didn't want to deal with it. Equipment was failing, so they'd get behind and be rushing to get the work done. As a result, they'd delay reporting and cut corners. They were getting that tumbling effect that happens when things aren't going smoothly."

A second concern was lack of visibility in leadership as to the actual current state at any given time. "We knew that issues were happening, but there was no easy way to keep on top of it."

The Solution:

Easy Problem Reporting and Much-Needed Visibility

The first and immediate application of See to Solve Alert was for easy, fast reporting of issues. "With See to Solve, we could allow people to quickly identify a problem, describe the problem, take a picture, and be done," explains the director. "You see it, you say something. It's really just that simple."

The team implemented See to Solve into day-to-day operations for formalized morning rounds of all SPD locations as well as for ad-hoc issue reporting and leadership visibility. "During this time, we would have a 15-minute meeting every morning, and we would use the See to Solve 'big board' to drive that work," says the director. This comprehensive, at-a-glance visibility gave the leaders an early warning sign and a chance to react and remediate issues in a timely manner. It also gave the team data to guide the improvement effort. "We were trying to do transformational change in this area," explains the director. "In order to do this you need to know what the data is. You need to know the facts on the ground. See to Solve provided this visibility."

The Result:

Sterile Processing Performance Improves Dramatically

With the help of easy problem reporting and better visibility of issues throughout SPD, the intensive improvement effort paid off. The daily 15-minute meetings gave leaders opportunities to react in a timely manner to immediate issues, but also provided the insight the team needed to conduct root cause analysis and make lasting changes for the better. "We've done some significant redesign work," says the director. "We've added new equipment, re-done some of the facilities and made other changes. We attacked the problem, and as we identified root causes, renovations occurred. We no longer have a panic every day. Performance is much better."