



Altru Health System

About Altru Health System

Altru Health System is a non-profit, community-based 257-bed hospital of 3,500 health professionals. Their team is dedicated to caring for the NE North Dakota and NW Minnesota region of approximately 200,000 residents for the past 130 years. Altru is an affiliate member of the Mayo Clinic Care Network and has been a Joint Commission Primary Stroke Center since 2012.

The Problem

During 2021 and early 2022, there was variation in Door-to-Needle times (DTN). The stroke program Medical Director, Dr. Cory Edwards, and Stroke Coordinator, Sandy Kovar, evaluated the current stroke flow process and identified opportunities for improvement. Altru wanted their stroke program to adopt nationally recommended best practices and time targets.

The Result

Based on Altru's current stroke workflow, they collaborated with us, TeleSpecialists, and identified the following key strategies to improve stroke care in their facility:

- Training education was given to all nursing staff with a focus on early recognition of stroke symptoms
- Community education was expanded to elementary, middle, and high schools
- "Stroke Champions" were identified in the high schools to provide presentations for school assemblies amongst their peers
- Two-tiered code stroke procedure was implemented to better identify stroke patients in the thrombolytic window
- Pre-mixing thrombolytics on a verbal order was initiated early in the stroke alert process
- Throughput time for CT was closely monitored and reduced, resulting in an average time to CT of 8 minutes with a 22-minute turnaround time to final read
- A "Stroke Care Team Turbo Award" recognition program was initiated for all staff involved in DTN times under 30 minutes

The Takeaways

- ✔ Altru Health System contracted with us to improve their stroke program and implement nationally recommended best practices and time targets
- ✔ The hospital provided their nursing staff educational trainings focused on better identifying stroke symptoms
- ✔ Altru's median DTN time decreased from 45 minutes to 41 minutes

Altru 2022-2023 Door-to-Needle

