

Greenbelt Profile: Cheryl Rowe

A Value Institute Learning Center Publication



Cheryl Rowe, Operations Manager for Health Information Services in the Community Group Practices at D-H, completed her first Greenbelt project in the fall of 2016.

Cheryl is one of the few students who completed her project in the target timeframe.

Cheryl began her career in medical records during high school when she took a job at a small provider office in Manchester, NH. She has been at D-H for over 30 years, having been offered a per diem position in college, which later turned into her first full-time job at D-H. She has spent all of her career in Health Information Services, working her way up to her current role as Operations Manager. She has presented at various national and regional conventions for the American Health Information Management Association and at EPIC user and expert group meetings. Cheryl also serves as a member of the Advisory Board for the Manchester Community College Health Information Technician degree program, providing opportunities for students to visit Dartmouth-Hitchcock and complete their internships as a member of the D-H team.

Cheryl has taken an interest in process improvement at D-H from the beginning. "Process improvement has been a cornerstone of Dartmouth-Hitchcock for what appears to be as long as I have been employed, including SQL and the Studer Group Achieving Excellence initiative. It is a part of our culture to be continuously seeking ways to provide the best care possible for every patient, every time, which includes looking at what we do on a daily basis and how can we do it better – smarter. I like to think outside the box at how we do our work and how technology can be utilized to improve our process," says Cheryl. "Health Information plays a key role in the care we provide to our patient. If we are not performing the best we can, it will have downstream adverse effects to our clinical departments who are providing the hands on care, and in the end our patients suffer. Improving our process to be efficient and error free is an ongoing effort, there are always ways to do something better. I am so fortunate to have the help and support of my team members, analysts and programmers, that are passionate about the challenge of finding ways to do our jobs better."

Cheryl completed her Yellowbelt Certification at DH prior to coming to Greenbelt class. She attended class in May 2016 and really enjoyed her experience. "I am an introvert by nature and the thought of sitting in a class with individuals I did not know and would have to speak with, did not have me looking forward to the week. Now I would not have it any other way. The hands on

learning and discussion was a relaxed atmosphere that made the learning, while exhausting, memorable. There were individuals from the Value Institute always available to answer questions, explain charts, graphs – whatever was needed. You bonded with your classmates, became their support system and cheerleaders during the grueling 180 days. You wanted to see your peers succeed. I would highly suggest that individuals take advantage of all the in-person trainings."

Cheryl's project, nicknamed the "OPEN" Project, for Outpatient Exit Notification, focused on the process for making changes in the system when patients transfer their primary care out of D-H. "The previous process for changing Primary Care Provider (PCP) for patients transferring in the Community Group Practice (CGP) locations resulted in loss of revenue, decreased access to care, skewed panels, and decreased patient satisfaction. My project explored and in the end implemented a process improvement to ensure that 95% percent of patients who have signed an authorization for transferring their care from Dartmouth Hitchcock CGP had their PCP changed," Cheryl explains. The success of Cheryl's project can be attributed to both her leadership and the commitment of her team. "I loved, loved my greenbelt team! They were so engaged and really wanted to improve the process. I like to say I am "special" because I had two coaches – Danielle Potter and Otelah Perry who were there to help and guide me along the way. They figured out my leadership style as

"I would highly suggest that individuals take advantage of all the in-person trainings." - Cheryl Rowe

well as how I liked to learn and used that to their advantage." Cheryl's Blackbelt coach, Otelah Perry adds "Cheryl was well prepared and encouraged her team to work the process (DMAIC) which won over the skeptics and built engagement in her team members."

Since finishing her first project, Cheryl has continued to utilize the DMAIC tools in her work and has thought about new projects to tackle. "I feel like I use the tools I learned just about every day. I am a doer – get it done now kind of person. I now take a step back, review the process, and collect the data to make sure I am heading in the right decision. I find myself looking at a process and doing a quick flow chart to see where there is redundancy or deviation from the standard. My teams are now able to provide cross-divisional coverage for many tasks because we have standardized so many of the process removing the deviations that can lead to errors," says Cheryl. In thinking about future projects, she is dreaming big and looking at the process around scanning and indexing paper documents into the medical record. "It will certainly be a larger greenbelt challenge; but I think I am ready."