

# Northside Hospital reduces fall injury rate by 74 percent

## Northside Hospital, Inc. Atlanta, GA

Northside Hospital is an extensive network of state-of-the-art facilities staffed with skilled, caring professionals who are dedicated to the health and wellness of the communities they serve. Specifically, the system includes three not-for-profit hospitals with over 1,000 licensed beds. All Northside hospitals are full-service, acute-care facilities that offer particular expertise in Maternity Services, Women's Health, Cancer Care, Surgery and Radiology.

## Challenge

In 2016, Northside Health System undertook a concerted effort to creatively address patient falls. The standard approach to fall prevention was to use the same bundle of actions (yellow skid-proof socks, yellow arm-band, bed low and a yellow falling star magnet on the door) for all patients who scored as a risk to fall. When a patient scored at higher risk, then the bed and chair alarms would be activated. This standard one-size-fits-all approach did not involve the patient or the family's active participation, and the tools used in the bundle were mainly used to communicate the patient's fall risk.

## Solution

Northside gave this project considerable attention, and a team was formed to develop a new and different approach after considering how falls had occurred and what might have prevented them from happening. The group decided to individualize the Fall Prevention Care Plan to include multi-disciplinary collaboration, pilot programs including a new fall-risk screening tool, a revised data collection and analysis process, and improved communication with patients and families. Specific actions that were taken included:

- Sharing comparative data from other facilities with front-line staff to encourage engagement in risk reduction activities that they could implement to help decrease falls with injury
- Individualizing fall prevention plans by matching the interventions with the risk factors. For example, if a patient was impulsive because of dementia, staff would have the bed and chair alarms activated regardless of their fall risk score
- Using ABCs to evaluate high risk for injury for patients at fall risk (age, bone disorders, coagulation abnormalities and recent major surgery)
- Trying new screening tools with different patient populations to see which best identified fall risk patients and reduced falls and injuries

*“By participating in the Vizient HIIN, we were able to identify additional opportunities to overcome challenges. We also received regional support from Vizient Southern States to help keep our project on track.”*

**Dayna Vidal**  
Manager, Patient Care Clinical Quality  
Northside Hospital, Inc.

- Creating a Tailoring Interventions for Patient Safety (TIPS) sheet that focused on individualizing the prevention interventions and serving as an educational tool for patients and their family members
- Sharing data in a more timely manner and making it transparent to support healthy competition between departments
- Using strategies from the Institute for Healthcare Improvement (IHI), the National Patient Safety Foundation and the Falls Toolkit from the VA National Center for Patient Safety, as well as consulting with and trending the process for the Vizient (Hospital Improvement Innovation Network) HIIN to track effectiveness
- Streamlining the Falls Team

## Results

The new Falls Prevention Program was initiated in Q1 2016 when Northside achieved a 44 percent decrease in the fall with injury rate. Northside sustained those improvements with a rate of .32 in Q4 2017, representing a 74 percent decrease in the fall injury rate since the start of the program. In addition to increased collaboration across disciplines and an improved reporting structure, the key to success was the involvement of the patients and their families.



For more information about our programming opportunities, contact us today at (770) 850-7400 or [info@vizientsouthernstates.com](mailto:info@vizientsouthernstates.com).

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