

## News Releases

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### GE Medical Systems Helps Boston Medical Center Continue to Meet Community Needs

**WAUKESHA, Wis.** – Through a Six Sigma-based improvement engagement led by GE Medical Systems, Boston Medical Center (BMC) is beating the odds in a tough environment. Recent headlines have focused on the financial difficulties facing all hospitals in Massachusetts. To meet these challenges, BMC is seeking solutions that would enable them to operate in a more efficient and cost-effective manner...not only amid current constraints, but also well into the future.

Boston Medical Center is a highly complex healthcare system, coping with a unique patient population, workforce shortages and other challenges. As part of their mission to provide care for the underserved, BMC offers many uncommon services including a health care clinic for the homeless, a center to treat refugees, an extensive HIV clinic, nutrition programs and a food pantry. To be able to maintain such services in today's demanding economic environment, the management team at Boston Medical Center has turned to GE Medical Systems to discover and implement operational improvements that use innovative methods to reduce cost and enhance revenue without staff reduction.

GE's Six Sigma approach, change management techniques and consulting expertise are helping BMC to achieve its objectives. Starting with the radiology department, process improvements are being made within the organization to shorten wait times for patients, ease the registration process and create the ability to scan more patients in a shorter timeframe. Boston Medical Center is streamlining operations and reducing costs, improving their ability to continue

serving the needs of the poor and uninsured within the community. This is an important advantage for the organization and for patients, since BMC represents the largest safety net hospital in New England, providing over \$246 million in free care to the uninsured in 2002.

“This is not another ‘flavor of the month’ quality improvement program, and it’s certainly not consulting as usual,” Ken Belcher, Vice President of Ancillary Services at BMC noted. “The project started with the Radiology Department, but impacted many other departments including: Admissions, Registration, Scheduling, Interpreter Services, Transport, Nursing and Information Technology. When staff were shown that this program was being implemented to fix processes, they embraced the changes. We began by identifying the underlying cause of a problem using statistical methods. In addition, CAP and Work-Out techniques were instrumental in helping to break down the silos in the organization.”

In addition to the many changes introduced in the Radiology Department, the team focused on inefficiencies and slow communication in transportation procedures for inpatients. To address the needs of a diverse and growing patient population, BMC incorporated three-way handsets for Interpreter Services as part of the patient transport process. This improvement enhanced communication and eliminated delays. BMC also arranged for expanded interpreter services hours, which will open up many more appointment possibilities making it easier for patients to be seen in a timely manner. Adjustments to the transport procedures have resulted in savings of up to 400 minutes per day, enhanced communication, improved productivity, reduced empty table time and increased staff satisfaction.

“GE’s Six Sigma approach incorporates both technical and cultural strategies to achieve long-term results,” said Pete McCabe, general manager for GE’s Performance Solutions group. “Our performance improvement tools and

techniques are enabling healthcare organizations like Boston Medical Center to overcome serious issues affecting service quality and patient access to care.”

The changes being implemented by Boston Medical Center as a result of this initiative are helping to stabilize internal operations and build competencies that will carry them through future challenges.

“We still have work ahead of us and this is an ongoing process,” Belcher commented, “but we feel that we are beginning to gain control over our own destiny and increase our capacity to meet community needs. Given the success of the initial projects, we’re looking at additional opportunities for improvement within the organization.”

### **About Boston Medical Center**

Boston Medical Center is a private, not-for-profit, 547-licensed bed, academic medical center located in Boston’s historic South End. The hospital is the primary teaching affiliate for Boston University School of Medicine. Emphasizing community-based care, Boston Medical Center, with its mission to provide consistently accessible health services to all, is the largest safety net hospital in New England. For more information, see [www.bmc.org](http://www.bmc.org).

### **About GE Medical Systems *Healthcare Services***

GE Medical Systems Healthcare Services offers a broad portfolio of business and clinical solutions for healthcare providers. These products include asset, performance improvement, education and financial services designed to help healthcare providers improve quality, enhance performance, increase productivity and reduce costs. GE Medical Systems Healthcare Services is a business of GE

Medical Systems, a \$9 billion global leader in medical imaging and technology.

Additional information about GE Medical Systems can be found at

[www.gemedical.com](http://www.gemedical.com)