



The PSA program has been a Godsend for us... We're seeing our quality scores improve, along with productivity in our individual units staying where they need to be. Those two things alone are well-worth the effort that was put into this.

STEPHEN GAMPHER
VICE PRESIDENT, ANCILLARY
SERVICES, ASCENSION SACRED
HEART PENSACOLA

AT A GLANCE

safeguarding our patients

In 2017, leaders at Ascension St. John Hospital in Detroit, Michigan, were faced with challenges that have become common across the country – staffing shortages, increased potential for patient suicides or self-harm, and a heightened focus on hospital-acquired falls and injuries. Due to these factors, the demand for patient observation rose exponentially and, today, has never been greater. With The Joint Commission stepping up their efforts to police policies and plans for managing these risks, Ascension leadership called on its ministries to maximize nursing productivity and patient-centered care, while tasking TouchPoint Support Services with implementing a sound strategy for managing the demand for patient observers.

THE SOLUTION

making a difference



Few hospitals had a true strategy for managing the risks of patient falls and self-harm in 2017, making it nearly impossible to measure or manage the true cost of these incidents and their impacts. Prior to this effort, ministries commonly utilized nurses and other highly compensated associates to provide 1:1 patient monitoring. This makeshift approach was expensive, disruptive to operations, and unreliable.

Gayle Novack, Ascension St. John Hospital's Chief Nursing Officer, led a group of hospital executives to identify a strategy for properly assessing patients and delivering the optimal form of observation based on their needs. Novack and her team determined that key elements in the plan should include:

- ✓ Use of an evidence-based tool for assessing a patient's suicide risk
- ✓ Use of remote audio/visual monitoring and assistive technologies, where appropriate
- ✓ Use of 1:1 patient observation, when needed
- ✓ Proper controls over demand, service allocation, and cost
- ✓ An integrated process for reporting and survey compliance
- ✓ Training and performance management for qualified patient observers

After reviewing the costs and capabilities offered by a third-party staffing company, Novack turned to TouchPoint and an internal team of cross-functional experts in the ministry to design and execute the strategy for introducing the Patient Safety Attendant service.

What is a Patient Safety Attendant?

Patient Safety Attendants (PSAs) are one of several interventions that ministries can use to safeguard high-risk patients. Typically sitting within arm's reach, PSAs provide companionship as they observe, listen and relay patient concerns to nursing or their assistants. They maintain a comfortable environment for the patient and record data for their clinical counterparts. The role of the PSA is refined in concert with the ministry's overarching strategy for maintaining the safety of patients who are at low-, moderate- or high-risk for falls or self-harm. Considering the needs of the anticipated patient population, the plan may include use of remote audio/video monitoring (for low-to moderate-risk patients), as well as technologies, such as bed exit alarms.



implementation

With factors as important as safety, satisfaction, engagement, and productivity on the line, TouchPoint leadership worked with the ministry team to implement a patient observation solution that would serve Ascension St. John Hospital, but could also be rolled out to other Ascension campuses in the future.

Collaborating with the Ascension Clinical Professional Development team, TouchPoint aligned clinical training standards, practices, and collateral for all current associates and new hires. PSA training equips associates with the skills and tools necessary for assisting patients with basic functions and handling combative patients, including:

- Verbal and physical signs and symptoms of agitation
- De-escalation techniques
- Fall prevention strategies
- Suicide risk-prevention strategies
- Proper process for removing dangerous objects and items
- Documentation of monitored behavior
- Use of technology or restraints, when needed
- How to summon help
- Basic first aid and general safety
- Basic Life Support and CPR training
- Management of Aggressive Behavior certification

Employing a 1:1 patient observation solution to support the hospital's operational needs while effectively managing risks and costs would be challenging. TouchPoint leadership analyzed the available data to determine a reasonable initial staffing plan that would eliminate the use of temporary workers. Their shared goal was to build a pool of full- and part-time talent based on the average census, but able to flex up to meet demand. They accomplished this by hiring 64 new TouchPoint associates, with Ascension associates who served in the role transitioning later in the year. In addition, the hospital deployed a separate remote audio/video monitoring team for moderate- and low-risk patients



A management structure for 24/7 oversight was utilized by TouchPoint to oversee the allocation of resources and collaboration with allied teams, including nursing and those responsible for video monitoring. Electronic quality assurance assessments were created for TouchPoint leaders to complete as they rounded on the PSAs. Conducted in real-time on an iPad, the assessments monitor how well the attendant focuses on the patient, maintains a safe environment and completes documentation. Training is performed jointly by TouchPoint and the hospital's nurse educators, who provide content for ongoing training during team huddles and in-service training programs. TouchPoint also maintains all documentation required for regulatory compliance

“Being able to show kindness and consideration for others and treat them how they want to be treated encompasses our work as PSAs... Patients and families take comfort in knowing skilled and considerate PSAs are taking care of their loved ones. ”

DONNA WEST
PATIENT SAFETY ATTENDANT,
ASCENSION ST. VINCENT EVANSVILLE

the results

The Patient Safety Attendant program was recognized as a contributing factor to many systemwide improvements at Ascension St. John Hospital, including:

- Nursing satisfaction rose; turnover dropped from 18.8% to 10.5% with a continued downward trend
- The cost of patient observation dropped \$174.80 per patient day
- 90% of PSA demand is met by the TouchPoint dedicated team, minimizing disruption to allied teams
- Overtime was reduced
- Use of temporary workers was eliminated
- The equivalent of 32.76 clinical full-time staff were relieved of direct observation duties, re-focusing nurses and patient care technicians on person-centered care

The program's early success at Ascension St. John Hospital led to its quick integration at additional locations across the country. The program expanded to the Indiana market in 2019, the Florida market in 2020, the Illinois market in 2021, and the Texas market in 2022.

INDIANA

The Indiana market was the second to implement these solutions and greatly benefited from the lessons learned in Michigan. Among them was how to take the regional PSA pool to the next level by having pockets of cross-trained PSAs deployed to multiple units. This practice has since become standard in other markets where client hospitals are in relatively close proximity.

FLORIDA

Florida had the first go-live for the program during the Covid-19 pandemic, a time when healthcare facilities faced an even greater shortage of doctors, nurses, and staff. Because of this, TouchPoint's PSA offerings proved a valuable solution to our hospitals during such an unprecedented time.

In Pensacola, Ascension Sacred Heart was already utilizing patient transportation and valet services had their teams cross-trained as PSAs and wellness screeners. This created a flexible workforce that could fluidly move from one duty to another, based on demand.

Today, TouchPoint has 150 PSAs sitting at any one point in time with a dedicated team handling hiring, training requests, and dispatch. Since the program's launch, TouchPoint has partnered with Ascension's National Clinical Professional Development team to create a standardized training program for all PSAs within the organization and Ascension that meets all regulatory requirements. To date, TouchPoint PSAs have a 100% success rate in regulatory audits.

To better understand the changing needs of our clients and patients, TouchPoint has equipped the PSA program with tools and resources needed to gather important data that can be shared with our partners in Ascension. These metrics create data transparency and are shared each month with Ascension's state and local leaders to provide them with the information they need to improve care, where to allocate additional resources, and to ensure patients receive the highest quality care possible.



ILLINOIS

Illinois requires all PSAs to receive Crisis Prevention and Intervention (CPI) training, which equips individuals with proven strategies to safely defuse anxious, hostile, or violent behavior at the earliest possible stage. Since incorporating the training and seeing it in action, TouchPoint leaders have come to recognize and appreciate how effective and necessary CPI is. Because of this, CPI is becoming integrated as a standard requirement for PSAs as the service continues its expansion.

TEXAS

Benefiting from knowledge gained from the prior rollouts, Texas' implementation of the PSA program proved to be the most successful to date. Due to the scale and number of associates needed to perform and meet a competitive market demand, the program was rolled out in three phases from December 2021 to March 2022. The target goal for the PSA program is to meet, at minimum, 90% of all ministry requests – a goal that our Texas units achieved and has since been reached in PSA service lines for all markets.

operational snapshot

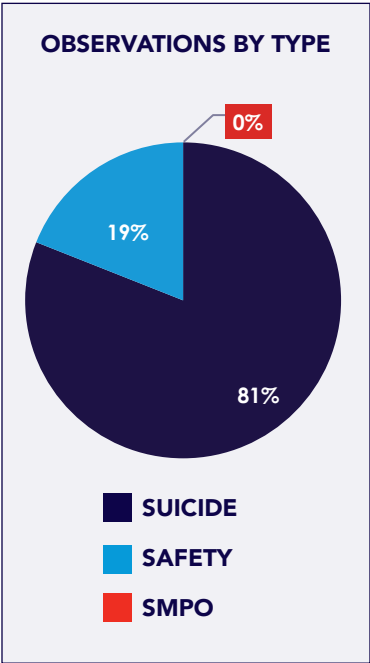
BEDSIDE FILL RATE

100%

*TouchPoint Internal Goal: 90%

ASSOCIATES PROVIDED

**5.0/
SHIFT**



POSITIONS FILLED

97%

TOP UNIT UTILIZATION

**1
PCUW**
**2
8T** **3
6T**

ROLLING 3 MONTH AVG COST PER HOUR

\$29.60

MARCH COST PER HOUR

\$29.14

For more than 12 years, TouchPoint Support Services has provided food and support services to Ascension hospitals and senior living communities. We are proud to expand our service offerings to include one of our most important – Patient Safety Attendants. These caring associates are integral to helping patients navigate some of the most difficult moments of their lives simply by being there, acting as a comforting voice

or an empathetic ear, all while providing continuous patient observation and monitoring. They are not just observers; they are advocates for their patients’ mental and physical well-being. The work TouchPoint’s PSAs perform every day across the country proves that a patient’s healing, whether physical, mental, or emotional, begins by providing compassion at every point of human contact.

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“People that resort to violence often have low frustration tolerance and limited problem-solving skills. Evidence shows that when the responder is empowered with a set of standardized tools, like CPI, we have a greater-known opportunity to decrease violence. When the responder has these tools, it changes their presence from being hypervigilant, which is excitatory, to being present and attentive with confidence that they can handle situations that may arise. Suicide-grounded research repeatedly demonstrates that being present in a calm and meaningful contributes greatly to positive outcomes. I think it's great that CPI training is being offered to the TouchPoint PSAs.”

MICHELLE MUALEM
COORDINATOR, REGULATORY COMPLIANCE,
ASCENSION MICHIGAN

“We are charged with keeping our patients safe by caring for and understanding them no matter what they're going through... We must give them something positive to think about. My most memorable encounter dealt with a patient I worked with in home health. He was partially blind and when I started sitting with him, he was so ill he didn't want to eat. I talked to him, made him feel at peace and he started eating again. He kept perking up during the stay and got himself through that hospitalization. Just being able to talk and help get them home to their loved ones safely is important. And, if they don't have loved ones, letting them know someone here cares for them is crucial ”

JEANNETTE DURHAM
PATIENT SAFETY ATTENDANT,
ASCENSION ST. VINCENT ANDERSON

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ABOUT

Ascension



Ascension is committed to delivering compassionate and personalized care for all, especially those who need it most. At Ascension, our commitment to patients and families begins with the doctors, nurses and care teams serving in our hospitals and care sites across the country. Our Catholic identity and healing Mission call us to care for everyone with dignity and respect, valuing those we serve and those we serve alongside. Our national presence enables clinicians and caregivers to share best practices and innovations to ensure that we are providing the right care, at the right time and in the right setting. We are committed to an inclusive culture that recognizes and celebrates diverse talents and perspectives. We are called to serve. We are Ascension.

TouchPoint Support Services

TouchPoint Support Services, a sector of Compass Group, provides integrated food, nutrition, environmental, and support services to acute care hospitals and senior living communities across the country. TouchPoint is committed to providing "compassion at every point of human contact" and giving patients, residents and customers a hospitality experience that is second to none. Our rich history and strong culture is demonstrated through innovative culinary and patient programs, sustainable and green cleaning initiatives, and award-winning associate training and development programs.

For more information about
TouchPoint, please visit our website:
www.IamTouchPoint.com.

For information on joining the
TouchPoint family of associates, please
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iamtouchpoint.com/careers

