

Regional command center helps create capacity for 19,000 additional patients annually

Case Study: Providence Swedish - Puget Sound Region

Background

As an eleven-facility, 2400-bed health system in the Pacific Northwest, Providence Swedish wanted to centralize capacity management and transfer placement decisions across three distinct service areas: North Puget Sound, Central Puget Sound and South Puget Sound. At the time of implementation, two of the large hospitals in the North and South service areas were operating at full capacity and experiencing times of high boarding numbers within their emergency departments. With high levels of patient boarding and long ED wait times, those facilities were frequently forced to turn away transfer patients. The system lacked real-time, enterprise-wide visibility to show that beds were available at facilities in the North and South regions, limiting its ability to optimize resources and to coordinate timely care.

Approach

To improve visibility and coordination across all regions, Providence Swedish established a centralized hub known as the Providence-Swedish Staffing, Transfer, and Operations Center (STOC). This regional command center was designed to support real-time decision making by bringing together people, processes, and technology into one collaborative space. The STOC serves the entire Puget Sound region and was built with four core objectives:

- **Co-locate key operational and clinical staff** to improve communication and accelerate problem-solving
- **Deliver centralized services** that support clinicians and patients across all eight facilities
- **Connect staffing and placement functions** to optimize the use of available beds and personnel
- **Integrate technology into daily workflows** - including huddles, admissions, discharges, and transfers - to create situational awareness about regional resources and needs

“We looked at where patients were at the most risk in their care, coming in or going out of the hospital, or moving between units. We focused on making these transitions easier for caregivers and patients.”

— Lindsey Powell, MBA, BSN, RN, Director of Patient Placement & Capacity at Providence

¹Metrics provided by Providence Puget Sound based on data collected from 2023-2024.

²Metrics provided by Providence Puget Sound based on data collected from 2022-2024.

Impact

With the STOC providing care teams and operational staff with real-time insights and facilitating collaborative decision-making, Providence Puget Sound improved local and regional processes and increased system-wide capacity. Key outcomes include:

Increased transfer acceptance¹

Puget Sound Central:

- 10% Increase in internal transfers
- 21% increase in external transfers
- Able to maintain capacity for higher acuity, specialized transfers

Puget Sound North:

- 29% increase in internal transfers
- 69% increase in external transfers

Puget Sound South:

- 43% increase in internal transfers
- 103% increase in external transfers

Improved ED throughput²

Puget Sound Central:

- 46% reduction in total ED boarding hours across the system
- 48.6% reduction in patients leaving without being seen

Consistent discharges²

- 3.0-16.0% increase in discharge efficiency across the regions

Transparency in Bed Availability and Optimized staffing²

- 36% decrease in blocked bed hours due to standardized staffing approach, and transparency and oversight of unit staffing, census, and bed blocks

Result

- Increase system-wide patient admission volume by 15%
- Creating capacity for approximately 19,000 additional patients annually

“Our command center helps us get the right patient in the right bed with the right caregiver—the first time. By streamlining operations, we optimize resources and improve access to care across the Puget Sound region.”

— Lindsey Powell, MBA, BSN, RN, Director of Patient Placement & Capacity at Providence