



Unique Culture Drives EVS Performance at Allegheny Health Network’s Wexford Hospital

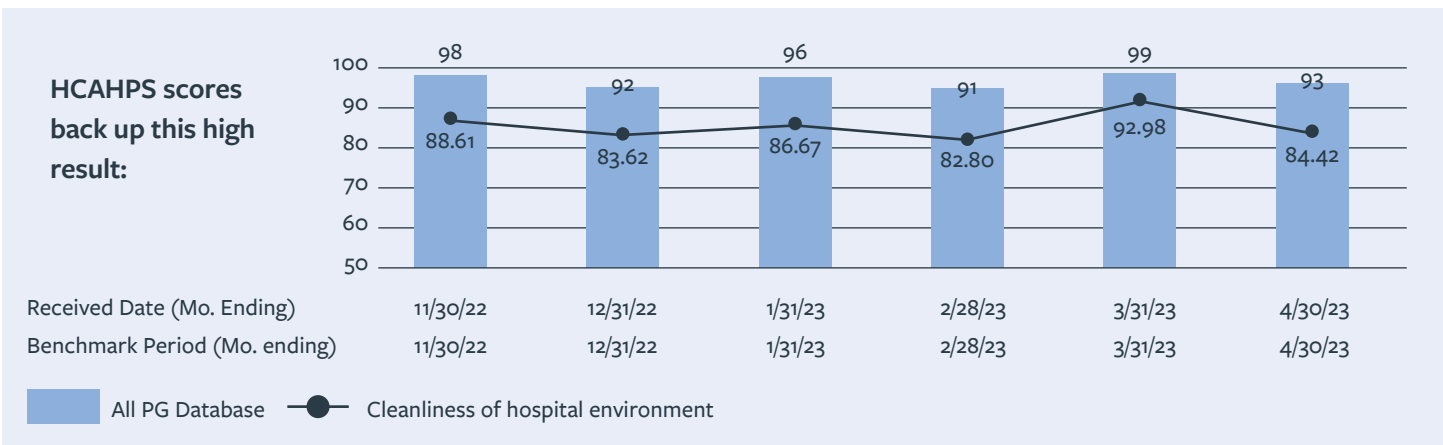
In September 2021, in the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic, Allegheny Health Network (AHN) opened the doors to a new, 160-bed hospital in Wexford, Pennsylvania. From developing operational plans for AHN’s state-of-the-art Wexford Hospital to creating strong clinical and support teams, Crothall Healthcare EVS (Crothall) and its clients knew that opening the new hospital would encounter extra challenges. During the pandemic, Hospital leaders were concerned they could not attract and retain the right people for its Environmental Services (EVS) staff. In addition, because there was no public transportation to the hospital and intense wage competition among area employers, they knew a different approach was needed to recruit frontline workers. Partnering with best practices and innovative solutions, the Allegheny Health and Crothall teams created a culture that attracted great workers who quickly produced great results.

RESULTS



Patient Satisfaction.

As part of a 2022 Press Ganey survey, Wexford had a cleanliness score of 82.98%, a leading driver of patient satisfaction. Through the first five months of 2023, it ranks as the top-performing hospital within the Allegheny Health Network measured by cleanliness and consistently ranks in the 80th or higher among hospitals nationwide.

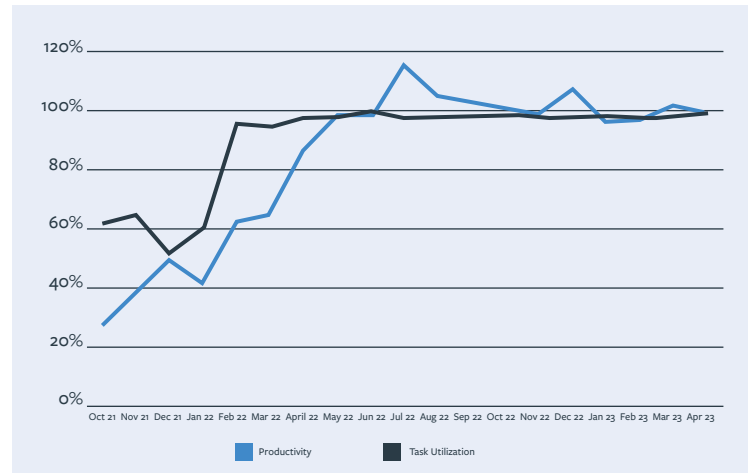


Efficiency through Technology.

Crothall’s Virtual Manager technology platform helped EVS operations run more smoothly during the first 18 months following the hospital’s opening. When it was difficult to attract staff during the COVID-19 pandemic, the technology helped managers closely monitor the productivity and workmanship of each EVS associate, thereby ensuring patient safety.

Utilization of the platform drove productivity to great heights.

Virtual Manager Monthly Compliance



Fast Patient Throughput.

Turnaround times for patient rooms following a discharge ranged from 49 minutes to 55 minutes between October 2022 and March 2023. The ability of the EVS team to quickly clean rooms and make them available for new patients helped improve patient care.

Month	ED	Rooms	Discharges	Turn Time
October	2,152	1,155	3,307	49 Minutes
November	2,213	1,112	3,325	52 Minutes
December	2,218	1,246	3,464	55 Minutes
January	2,168	1,303	3,471	49 Minutes
February	2,049	1,137	3,186	46 Minutes
March	2,277	1,277	3,554	49 Minutes

Strong Employee Engagement.

A survey by Gallup, Inc. shows Wexford employee engagement scores are high. To continually show appreciation for employees, EVS managers now recognize an “Employee of the Month” and have added a “Shout Out Box” for EVS associates to praise each other for hard work. Management also provided iPad’s and iPod’s to associates, enabling them to work with the device of their choice.



Q12 Mean
The Gallup Q12 score represents the average of the scores of 12 items that Gallup has consistently found to measure employee engagement as linked to business outcomes

“Since I started working at Wexford in January, I have noticed the atmosphere here is pleasant and that very few people that use the phrase ‘that’s not my job’. I believe that comes from the attitude of the management and that instills the cooperation of the workers.”

— Tina M., Crothall EVS Associate

CHALLENGE

Opening the new AHN Wexford Hospital in September 2021, in the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic, was going to be tough. Attracting and retaining special mission-driven EVS staff during this time was doubly challenging with hurdles such as intense wage competition with area employers and a lack of public transportation to the hospital. They knew a different approach was needed to recruit the proper frontline workers.

Recruitment centered on building a unique culture that emphasized teamwork, collaboration, safety, and engagement. And this approach has worked. Only 18 months after it opened with a 55-person EVS team, scores for cleanliness and patient experience are among the highest in the Allegheny Health Network while employee turnover is among the lowest.

“In opening a new hospital, we had the unique opportunity to set the culture we wanted for all our teams, and we have done that with Crothall’s Environmental Services. We recognized that setting the culture was actually the easy part; the hard part now is maintaining that culture, hiring the right fit, and engaging our teams, and almost two years into the new hospital, Crothall has achieved just that.”

— Amy Cashdollar, Chief Operating Officer, AHN Wexford Hospital

SOLUTIONS

Several strategies have helped build a unique culture at Wexford that has led to a stable workforce and high cleanliness and patient experience scores. These included:

A Strong Team Approach.

Crothall’s leadership team focused early on building a cohesive team for staff and leaders. Newly-hired managers were immediately invited to attend key programming sessions with the hospital management team. Everyone, including managers and frontline workers, attended classes at the Crothall training center and met with the hospital’s Infection Prevention nurse to understand how to stay safe while doing their work.

Crothall’s mid-level managers also included housekeepers as part of daily huddles with the Wexford’s nursing department, which provides them with first-hand knowledge about the patients on each floor and improves patient care. To help Spanish-speaking staff members succeed, duty sheets were published in Spanish to help manage their daily work routines. Crothall also invested in English as a second language classes taught by the Pittsburgh Literacy Foundation for these employees.

Crothall leaders cleaned patient rooms, scrubbed floors, and transported waste alongside frontline workers to show their commitment. As a result, the vacancy rate among the EVS team averaged less than 10% by mid-2023, ranking Wexford Hospital among the top-performing hospitals within the Allegheny Hospital Network.



Career Advancement.

New associates see a possible career path when they look at their leadership team in Wexford. Each Crothall leader at Wexford began their career as a housekeeper and was then promoted to their current position.

EVS Director Jim Komorowski started housekeeping in 1998 as an entry level associate and now leads the team. Komorowski has held several different positions in seven different hospitals on his journey to build a career.

The hospital's assistant director and two operations managers were also recently promoted internally to advanced positions in the Allegheny Health Network.

Komorowski tells his story to new associates while still working next to them, setting an example by often helping scrub floors as part of the team's third shift.

Attracting and Retaining Quality Workers with Incentive Pay.

In a tight labor market, Crothall and AHN worked together to attract high-quality candidates by providing sign-on bonuses for new employees, as well as referral bonuses to attract new employees.

At Crothall's recommendation, the hospital also offered a higher starting pay rate for frontline workers with EVS experience at other hospitals or companies. This decision reduced training time and attracted experienced housekeepers to the EVS team. New employees receive a \$1,000 bonus after first 90 days and employees referring these candidates received \$500 if the newly-hired person remained for 90 days.

Hospital Leadership Involvement.

Through its "managing by walking around" style, the hospital's leadership team made it easier to work together. Chief Operating Officer Amy Cashdollar set the tone, greeting housekeepers by name and recognizing staff personally for their hard work while on her weekly rounds with the team.

With hospital leaders regularly conducting patient rounds, attending the EVS team daily huddles or joining them for meals, EVS leaders are able to speak with them and quickly discuss key issues immediately.

“I never ask an associate to do something that I have not done, cannot do, or won't help them with.”

— Jim Komorowski, AHN Wexford EVS Director,
Crothall Healthcare



“We were able to build our program from the ground up through a special partnership with the hospital’s leadership and the ability to hire the right people, including professional housekeepers. Once they were hired, we’ve also demonstrated our support for each employee through a strong bonus program and other unique features, such as English-language courses for Spanish-speaking employees. We want each person to know they play an important role in our success.”

— **Chris Connelly, Senior Regional Director of Operations, Crothall Healthcare**

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