

PATIENT DUMPING HAS DANGEROUS RESULTS

Cause Map

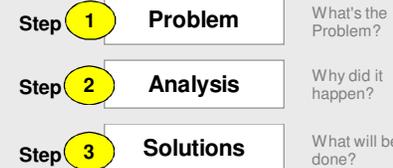
Hospital pays \$250M in penalties & fees after leaving patient at skid row without any arrangements

"Patient dumping is intolerable to me. I do have it in my mind to send a message to other hospitals that this won't be tolerated."
- Los Angeles City Attorney Mike Feuer

Cause Mapping is a Root Cause Analysis method that captures basic cause-and-effect relationships supported with evidence.

CAUSE MAPPING

Problem Solving • Incident Investigation • Root Cause Analysis

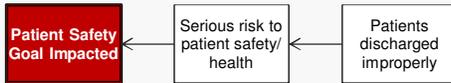


1 Problem

What	Problem(s)	Patients "dumped"	
When	Date	Settlement January 3, 2014	
	Time	N/A	
Where	Different, unusual, unique	Patients typically homeless	
	Facility, site	Hospital	
	Task being performed	Patient released/ left at skid row	
Impact to the Goals	Patient Safety	Serious risk to patient safety/ health	
	Employee Safety	N/A	
	Environmental	N/A	
	Compliance	Civil penalties & legal fees	\$250,000
	Patient Services	Patients discharged improperly	
	Schedule/ Operations	?	
	Property/ Equipment	?	
	Labor/ Time	Potential for follow-up care	?
		This incident	\$250,000
	Frequency	Other area hospital received \$1.6M fine in 2009	Annualized Cost \$250,000

2 Analysis

Basic Level Cause Map - Start with simple Why questions.

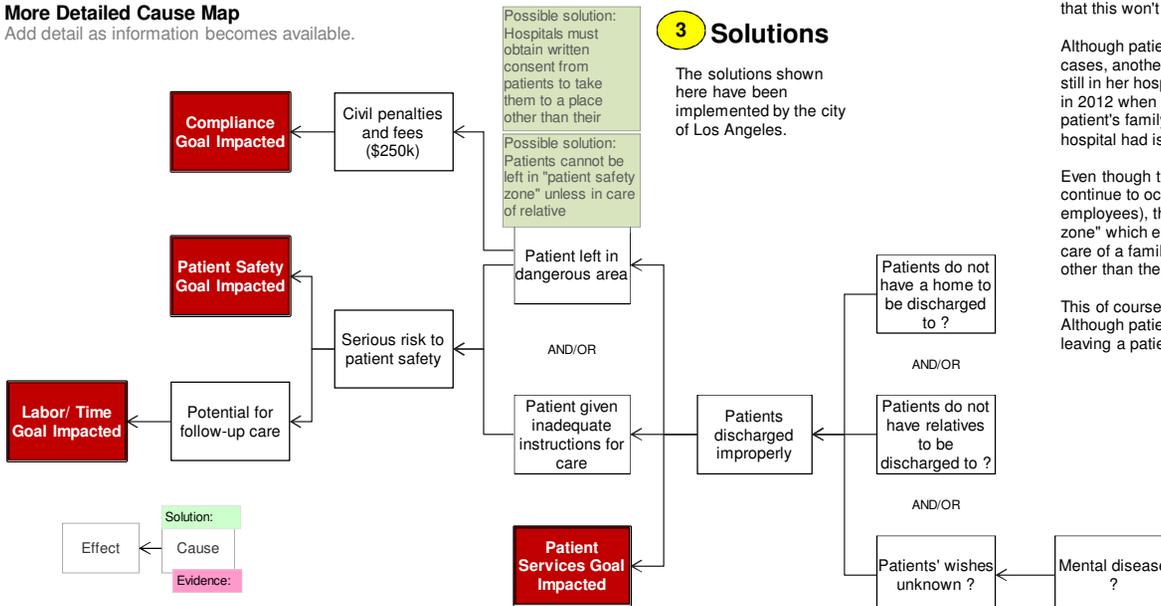


Basic Cause-and-Effect

"Patient dumping", when hospital patients in improperly discharged, sometimes to dangerous areas, or even out of state, and sometimes without proper instructions for care, is a serious risk to patient safety and health and can result in serious costs for the hospitals and people involved.

More Detailed Cause Map

Add detail as information becomes available.



3 Solutions

The solutions shown here have been implemented by the city of Los Angeles.

"Patient dumping" leads to obvious concerns for the health and safety of these patients. That's led city attorneys and homeless advocates to crack down. Operators of homeless shelters and rescue missions in the area have installed "dump cams", which allow them to identify cases where patients are being "dumped". In Los Angeles, the police department has stated they will arrest anyone who leaves patients outside a shelter. And Mike Feuer, a city attorney, says, "Patient dumping is intolerable to me. I do have it in my mind to send a message to other hospitals that this won't be tolerated."

Although patient dumping appears to have lessened in recent years, it's still a real problem. In other newsworthy cases, another Los Angeles hospital settled a group of charges in 2011 when it discharged a disoriented patient - still in her hospital gown - by taxi and she was left in the street. Yet another area hospital was sued for negligence in 2012 when it left a patient being treated for schizophrenia outside a rehabilitation center without notifying the patient's family. In 2013, the city of San Francisco filed suit against the state of Nevada, saying that a psychiatric hospital had issued bus tickets to California cities for mentally ill patients without making arrangements for them.

Even though the risks to patients are apparent (and financial costs to hospitals are possible), these problems continue to occur. In cases where organizations don't seem successful at ensuring the safety of its patients (or employees), the government will step in. In this case, Los Angeles in particular has implemented a "patient safety zone" which encompasses most of the city's downtown, where it is illegal to leave patients unless they are in the care of a family member. Additionally, hospitals must obtain written consent from patients to take them to a place other than their home.

This of course can be tricky when dealing with homeless, mentally ill, or patients without relatives living nearby. Although patient resources when dealing with these cases are limited - making proper discharge difficult in some leaving a patient alone in an unfamiliar, dangerous area is never the right answer.

For a free copy of our Root Cause Analysis Template in Microsoft Excel, used to create this page, visit our web site.

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