A PLANETREE PERSON-CENTERED CARE CASE STUDY

Sharp Coronado Secures Millions in Funding
RECOGNIZED AS CENTER OF EXCELLENCE IN ORTHOPEDIC SURGERY

HOW SHARP CORONADO TRANSFORMED OUTCOMES AND REPUTATION THROUGH PERSON-CENTERED CARE

Sharp Coronado Hospital in San Diego began looking into the person-centered care journey in the early 2000s, low on community sponsorship and barely breaking even on budget. Restrained by a remote geographic location separated from Greater San Diego by a bridge, Sharp Coronado needed to undergo a significant transformation in order to be seen as a destination hospital of choice for patients who would rather not travel to receive care.

Sharp had a clear vision of what that transformation would look like, and called the initiative The Sharp Experience. The Sharp Experience had three pillars: patient, employee, and physician satisfaction. Implementing that vision, however, would take research and organizational effort. Hospital leadership identified Mid-Columbia Medical Center as a geographically isolated hospital that was nonetheless thriving. They were the perfect example to follow in Sharp’s own person-centered care path — and key to Mid-Columbia’s success was implementation of the Planetree model.

With that, Sharp Coronado joined a pilot program to help develop Person-Centered Care Certification criteria — the first step of a journey that would lead the hospital to improved clinical outcomes, market share, national reputation, and patient satisfaction.
The Path to Excellence in Person-Centered Certification

As with any other hospital on the Planetree journey, Sharp Coronado began with an assessment. “One of the best things Planetree offers is a fresh set of eyes from a neutral party looking at your facility from every angle,” says Dr. Susan Stone, Senior Vice President and CEO at Sharp Coronado. “The designation criteria alone form a roadmap to success. If you use those evidence-based criteria, and you don’t see the improvement you’re looking for, Planetree coaches help you by showing you how other hospitals succeeded in moving the needle.”

Planetree made recommendations based on the assessment, including forming a patient advisory council, implementing an open medical records program, incorporating integrative care, and leveraging a hospital-wide unit designation program so each department could customize their practices to their particular staff, expertise, and patient population.

CREATING A CULTURE OF PERSON-CENTERED CARE

Sharp Coronado achieved Planetree Person-Centered Care Certification in only four years. Transforming a hospital culture that fast was an incredible feat, but Sharp found that employees across the hospital were highly motivated to meet the criteria, and proud to be part of the mission. In fact, more than 100 employees volunteered to take part in committees to help inform and implement the person-centered care best practices. The keys to effecting transformational change were to demonstrate the Planetree philosophy by example, and show real evidence that the best practices worked.

Implementing open medical records was initially a difficult sell, since Sharp Coronado’s medical staff was concerned about litigation. One doctor volunteered for a six-month pilot, yielding excellent results: patients were better equipped to manage their own care after discharge, families were appreciative that they understood what was going on with the patients, and litigation did not increase. Seeing the efficacy of the open record pilot, the rest of the medical staff unanimously supported implementing the practice.

Another challenge was incorporating integrative care — often a sensitive topic for traditional medicine practitioners. Concerned with the possibility of overselling the efficacy of practices like acupuncture, massage, and aromatherapy, Sharp Coronado began by implementing integrative care in the hospice unit to improve quality of life for patients. Caregivers soon observed that hospice residents experienced less nausea, better sleep, and more calm. After a patient wrote a letter of testimony extolling the benefits of these methodologies, the medical committee unanimously approved making integrative care available to all patients.

Through all these efforts, the patient advisory council was an invaluable source of guidance. “Our community has embraced this model of care beyond our wildest dreams,” says Dr. Stone, “and to this day, we have very involved community members who continue to give us feedback on every level of service and what we can do to improve.” Hospital policy and practice changes are now always informed by the question, “Where is the patient’s voice in this?”
CARE ENVIRONMENT UPGRADES

2008

Sharp renovated their main surgery unit

2013

A significant addition was added to the facility: a healthy living center that brings the best of the spa, gym, and physical therapy together under one roof, changing the community perspective of the hospital as a partner in wellness, not just a place to go for episodes of illness or injury

2015

Sharp Coronado transformed their cafe to a restaurant-like dining experience — a true asset for the community, many of whose members visited the hospital for more than one meal per day

2017

Sharp constructed an outpatient pavilion with two ORs and a pre-op post-op area where patients can feel truly valued and cared for

Person-Centered Care Outcomes

For Sharp Coronado, better patient outcomes led to stronger relationships with the community, recognition as a healthcare leader — specifically, the joint replacement surgery program was named one of the best hospital orthopedic programs by Becker’s Hospital Review — and, eventually, millions of dollars in additional funding. After four years of pursuing their person-centered healthcare journey and Planetree certification, Sharp Coronado went from a negative bottom line to receiving enough financial contributions to grow dramatically.

While improving the physical care environment is an important piece of becoming Planetree certified, Sharp Coronado didn’t initially have the budget to transform their facility. However, once Sharp demonstrated to the community the value of their person-centered transformation, they succeeded in gaining $10 million from the city of Coronado to renovate the emergency department and public corridors in 2006. As funds continued to pour in, Sharp Coronado made more changes to the care environment that lifted the spirits of patients and staff alike, while improving their quality of care.

“Planetree has secured our financial viability through the transformation of every aspect of our care. More than that, an employee told me we’ve created a ‘culture of love.' That’s the core of what we’re about as healthcare providers and human beings — showing we’re here for patients and families during a difficult time, and we’re here for physicians and staff at every level. Having employees, patients, and physicians really feel that is the highest compliment.”

— Dr. Susan Stone, Senior VP and CEO, Sharp Coronado Hospital

In the pursuit of Planetree Certification, Sharp Coronado went from being a financially struggling hospital seen as good, but not great to becoming a point of pride for their surrounding community. Sharp’s residents and staff now regard the hospital as being almost a beach resort within the walls of a healthcare center — a healing, caring environment that nurtures everyone under its roof.

Be The Person-Centered Change You Want to See

Person-centered care is more than just healthcare best practice — it is the future of wellness. To bring these outcomes to your own healthcare facility, or to learn more about the process of becoming Planetree Person-Centered Care Certified, contact Planetree today.

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