Developing and Implementing Hospital Quality Systems for Efficient Healthcare Operations Management

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Abstract:

Quality Management Systems becoming more important and plays a major role in current Public and Private healthcare sector to achieve clinical excellence. Effective quality management systems results in modification, expansion and the modernization of healthcare services.

Efficient healthcare operations of hospitals is also the major concern for the management team which involves multiple departments, numerous activities, interlinked processes and the effective usage of resources. Implementation of hospital quality systems will streamlines the processes of both clinical and nonclinical departments which results in efficient healthcare operations management.

The public and private healthcare sector is gradually changing due to the growing influence of the patient association, increased competition in the market and the necessity of the healthcare service delivery in a more effective and efficient manner. Especially in public healthcare sector, change management is the biggest task. It is very important to the employees of public healthcare sector to accept for change management which helps to improve their skills and to achieve service excellence.

This paper provides a simple and clear description to the healthcare quality and operations team about how to develop and implement quality systems in hospitals which leads to efficient healthcare operations management.

Keywords: Quality Systems, Operations Management, Healthcare Sector, Continuous Quality Improvement (CQI).

1. Introduction:

Quality in healthcare sector is different as compared to quality in other sectors. Quality in healthcare is directly linked to patient safety. It aims at saving precious human lives.

The word quality means facing or receiving good or bad of different aspects to different people because it is purely based on a person's perception especially in healthcare sector. Quality can be defined as value for money.

The ISO 9001:2015 is the latest revised standard for quality management system. Within the framework of this standard, quality is defined as "degree to which a set of inherent characteristics fulfils requirements." WHO defined quality of healthcare services in six subsets such as patient – centred, equitable, accessible, effective, safe andefficient.

Quality Assurance was first introduced into modern medicine by a British Nurse, Florence Nightingale, who assessed the quality of care in military hospitals. She introduced the first standards in nursing care, these resulted in dramatic reduction of mortality rates in hospitals.

Quality in terms of patient perception is receiving quality of care, Quality in terms of healthcare provider/ employee perception is achieving patient or customer satisfaction and improving skills through quality standards implementation. Quality in terms of public perception is public recognition, quality certification and accreditation. Quality in terms of top management of hospital or employer perception is increased hospital profitability in case of private hospitals and increased accessibility of care or servicesby

public below poverty line in case of public or government hospitals.

The field of quality assurance in healthcare continues to evolve and expanding rapidly. The growth and development is the result of a current obsession with the quality of care by public and private sectors called the third revolution in the healthcare, a fascination that is expected to continue. Quality, therefore, would be assured primarily through the market place. As a result, quality efforts in the proposals focus on consumers choice by means of quality report cards, outcomes research disseminated through practice guidelines and provider education. Quality should be a major concern of a hospital. Once the hospital implements quality systems and got accredited or quality certified, it is important that continuous quality improvement (CQI) should be treated as a culture in the hospital.

Operations management plays a vital role in the health care sector. The hospital operational systems should directly structured and controlled by the top management.

2. Developing Hospital Quality Systems:

A quality hospital will have an established network of quality processes to deliver the quality of care or service. So, to establish quality processes, first the top management should commit to develop a hospital quality system.

In the present globally competitive environment, it is not just sufficient to achieve quality at any cost, it is necessary to achieve quality at a competitive cost to sustain the market forces especially

in private healthcare sector. In this context, establishment of Quality Management System (QMS) provides a right framework for the healthcare organizations to harness their capabilities, direct their efforts to achieve the intended business results, and provide a basis for long term growth and survival. In public healthcare sector also it is important to develop hospital quality systems so that there will be quality improvement initiatives which results in quality heathcare services for the below poverty line people.

Figure 1. Steps to develop Hospital Quality Systems (Author 2018).

1.   Quality Team Formulation:

→   To formulate a strong Quality Team in the hospital, the higher authority should choose the right qualified, knowledgeable, experienced persons with good credentials and privileges, those who are passionate about the implementation of hospital quality systems, actively participates to succeed efficient quality systems and operations management.

→   Apart from choosing the right persons within the healthcare organization, the higher authority of the hospitals or healthcare organizations or the government should recruit healthcare Quality Professionals with strong profiles of healthcare system.

→   Based on the services, facilities and departments, the higher authority should select persons or the Nodal officers responsible for Quality systems.

→   Once the Quality Team formulation has been done, awareness should be given to the whole staff and should create a culture of quality which is important only through Team work.

2.   Roles and Responsibilities of Top Management :

→   The Top Management has the ultimate role and responsibility of the hospital or healthcare organization and active involvement is required to create and achieve the quality and patient safety.

→   Management is represented by governing board and leaders of the hospital and they should be well aware of their roles and responsibilities towards hospital quality systems.

→   The Top Management should determine and define the healthcare organization's Vision, Mission, values, Quality policy and objectives to provide a sense of direction to all the staff.

→   The Top Management should create and implement organization's Organogram which is an important decision policy which establishes a hierarchy or the line of control, the channel of communication and reporting system.

→   The Top Management should support all the initiatives of quality systems.

→   The Top Management should have a complete understanding of all laws and regulations that are applicable to the organization. It is very importantto ensure that the healthcare organization is complying with applicable laws and regulations because maximum quality and safety initiatives have no meaning if the basic legal requirements are not met by the organization.

→   The Top Management must follow ethical practices and ensure the same by all staff in the healthcare organization.

→   The Top Management should maintain Professionalism in managing aspects of healthcare organization such as insources services and outsources services.

→   The Top Management should clearly determine and define the rights and responsibilities of patients and employees. Top Management should note that the satisfied employee or an individual will contributes more.

→   Most importantly, the Top Management should have a major role in budgeting which is a managerial function to manage and allocate resources effectively.

3.   Roles and Responsibilities of Quality Team :

→   Quality Team and the whole staff should have Strong Commitment towards Work.

→   Quality Team members should have an innovative, creative and technically adapt team player approach possessing strong communication, interpersonal coordination and analytical skills.

→   Quality Team members should be as able Leaders, Situation managers and should provide a direction, guidance to the employees during the implementation of quality systems in the healthcare organization.

→   Quality Team members should have Patience, Friendly and adjustable nature for appropriate implementation of Quality Systems.

→   Quality Team members should have a skill that he or she can motivate the employees to work efficiently to achieve better results.

→   Quality Team should create a blame-free culture, encourage reporting system of errors.

→   Quality Team members should clearly define and divide activities that should be done at department level and activities that should be done by core team.

→   Quality Team should do periodic reviews at all levels of hospital operations and should create an environment of Continuous Quality Improvement (CQI).

4.   Committee Meetings :

→   A hospital functions through its departments or a healthcare organization functions through its facilities and services. Committee is a group of people from different departments who meet together for the purpose of decision making on certain aspects which results in change or improvement in the organization. A large number of requirements pertaining to accreditation and quality depends up on effective functioning of committees which are required as per the hospital operations.

→   Committee meetings such as Hospital Infection Control Committee (HIC), Blood Transfusion Committee, Drug and Therapeutic Committee or Pharmaco-therapeutics committee, Safety Committee, Cardio Pulmonary Resuscitation (CPR) Committee, Medical Records Committee, Quality Improvement

Committee, Management Review Committee, Disaster and Emergency preparedness Committee, Ethics Committee, Grievance and Disciplinary Committee etc. should be conducted and functioned for Continuous Quality Improvement (CQI) in the healthcare organization.

5.   Strengthening Human Resources :

→   Human Resources can be defined as a group of both clinical and nonclinical staff responsible throughout the hospital operations.

→   Human Resources management will directly affects the quality of healthcare services.It is the responsibility of the human resources management personnel regarding entry of efficient, qualified, knowledgeable, experienced, talented and skilled person into the hospital and Capacity building of an existing low performing employee in the hospital.So, it is very important to strengthen and focus in depth towards human resources management.

→   Strengthening of human resources can be carried out through the following ways in an effective manner with proper and up-to-date documentation of every activity:

i.   Correct Manpower planning Procedures

ii.   Effective Recruitment Process

iii.   Appropriate Selection and Placement Procedures

iv.   Credentialing and Privileging Process

v.   Job Specification and Description

vi.   Background verification of the potential employee

vii.   Conduct Orientation and Induction Program for the new employees

viii.   Conduct In service Training & Development

ix.   Disciplinary and Grievance handling

x.   Assess Employees Health Needs

xi.   Performance Evaluation and Appraisal

xii.   Personnel record maintenance

xiii.   Encouragement and Motivational activities of employees

xiv.   Conduct Exit Interviews.

3.   Implementing Hospital Quality Systems:

"Quality is never an accident – it is always the result of high intention, sincere effort, intelligent direction and skilful execution; it represent the wise choice of many alternatives' –

William A Foster.

Once the Quality Systems developed within the healthcare organization, it is important to take necessary steps of implementing the quality systems within the healthcare organization as follows:

Fig.2. Steps to implement Hospital Quality Systems (Author 2018).

1.   Quality Team Planning and Leadership:

Quality Team planning should include a mix of managerial, clinical and nonclinical staff activities, proper delegation of work, setting targets to achieve the goals or objectives, keep tracking for the results. It can be done by designating champions or link persons in all the departments.

Leadership should not be always in an authoritative manner. Leaders should consider proposals from the employees which are innovative and creative. They should encourage employees to contribute, learn and develop. Organizational performances will be deeply attributed to leadership culture and strategies.

2.   Internal Assessments:

Quality Team should conductInternal Assessments based on a structured checklist or an assessment tool, identify gaps and develop action plans along with the higher authority of the hospital followed by monitoring compliance.Internal assessments helps to understand the current level of the hospital operations and standards.

3.   Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) and Policies:

Based on the services and facilities of the hospital or healthcare organization, the Quality Team need to create Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) and Policies through proper channel and need to implement them based on the modifications and suggestions arises from members of committee meetings.

During the implementation of SOPs and Policies, it is very important to give awareness on them to the concerned staff and need to clear if any doubts arises. Quality Team should ensure a smooth transition from the old procedures and policies to a set of efficient and up-to-date systems and protocols. The SOPs and Policies should be in a manner of user-friendly and it is very important that each and every employee should know and understand the SOPs, Policies and whatever the activity they do to implement quality systems.

4.   Training and Capacity Building:

Quality, Operations and HR Team should Conduct several sessions of Training and Capacity Building along with Documentations such as Training Calendar, Circulars, Attendance, Pre-Test and Post-Test, Training Evaluation and Training Evidences (Photos and Videos)

Quality Professionals should train all categories of staff along with Operations and HR Team regarding Committees, Standards, Standard Operating Procedures, Policies, protocols, modified processes, clinical skills, managerial skills, communication skills, importance of Teams and their roles, audits, actions, indicators, required and applicable signages, application and results of quality methods and tools, disaster and emergency preparedness and on many other clinical and nonclinical aspects.

5.   Internal Audits:

Internal Audits should be done by the Quality Team for overall or general audits in the hospital and by the Multidisciplinary Team for Clinical Audit, Medical Audit, Prescription Audit, Death Audit and Hospital Infection Control Audit and should take the necessary Corrective action and Preventive action (CAPA) Regular internal audits of all areas in the hospital by the trained internal auditors with the use of a structured or standard checklist, will help in sustaining and in institutionalizing the quality initiatives. This will serve as periodical alerts and reminder for the departments to focus on gap closure.

6.   Key Performance Indicators (KPIs)/ Quality Indicators:

The hospital Key Performance indicators (KPIs) can also be called as Quality Indicators or Outcome indicators. These indicators can be classified as Clinical indicators and Managerial indicators. Further can be classified as productivity indicators, efficiency indicators, clinical care and safety indicators and service quality indicators.

Quality Team need to play a key role in monitoring, measuring, analysing and benchmarking the indicators on continuous basis and put through Corrective action and Preventive action (CAPA). The results of CAPA should be integral part of management review by Top Management of the hospital or the healthcare organization. It is important to get all departments track specific indicators that add value to the delivery of care.

7.   Quality Methods and Tools:

Application of Quality Techniques or Methods and Tools in the today's hospital operational systems and processes is important for quality improvement. The quality techniques or methods and tools such as Lean six sigma, value stream mapping, kaizen, Five S or 5S, PDCA Cycle, visual management and seven QC tools can be applied for Continuous Quality Improvement (CQI).

4.   Originality/Value:

This paper provides a simple and clear description to the healthcare quality and operations team about how to develop and implement quality systems in hospitals which leads to efficient healthcare operations management.

Implications:

✓   This paper helps to strive for best practices.

✓   Helps to discover new techniques and technologies during quality systems implementation and use them to achieve world class performance.

✓   It provides a clear framework for organizational structure and management.

✓   It helps to improve the risk management and risk reduction.

✓   It helps to organize and strengthen all the efforts for patient safety.

✓   It helps to strengthen the pubic or the community confidence in the quality and safety of care, treatment and services.

✓   It helps to provide a competitive edge in the market place.

5.   Conclusion:

This paper concludes that the Implementation of hospital quality systems will streamlines the processes of both clinical and nonclinical departments which results in efficient healthcare operations management.By proper implementation and monitoring of hospital quality systems, the ultimate result will be achieving patient satisfaction and employee satisfaction. Satisfied individual or an employee will contributes more and improved patient satisfaction leads to better performance of the hospital.

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