Greenland Hospital Case Study

Cultural Issues:
Greenland hospital is faced with a very peculiar situation. The community as a whole has slowly but surely been changing demographically. Firstly, the community has faced an economic change that has drastically changed the economic landscape of the region. With the main sources of employment leaving the region, the opportunity for quality income has been diminished for both the old and young populations alike. Due to the decline in quality employment, the main sources of income for the young and old are large corporate brick and mortar stores with low benefits. The remaining sources of employment are the hospital and school, both of which are facilities that would, for the most part, require some form of a degree and experience to work for. This decline in occupational opportunities has resulted in fewer benefits for the population and less expendable cash in the local market economy. As a result of fewer benefits and less money circulating in the economy, it would be understandable for the population to have less access to the healthcare system as a whole. This is the main cultural issue that Greenland hospital faces; a community that has been slowly losing its capability to access quality healthcare due to a lack of economic growth and ability to pay for healthcare cost.

The economic depression of the area is not the only issue that the hospital faces. The town of Plymouth has been changing demographically; not only in income levels but also in its ethnic representation. Over a ten-year period, Plymouth has received a surge of Hispanic and African-American populations. This surge in minority populations has also coincided with a slight decrease in the Caucasian populations. As a population changes from a one-dynamic population to a more diverse population, one may see a change in the healthcare dynamic. These ethnic minorities often face disparities in healthcare, sometimes as a result of socioeconomic causes, sometimes as a result of intentional or unintentional discrimination, and sometimes as a result of a cultural barrier between the healthcare provider and recipient. The secondary issues that Greenland must address are the disparities that these minority groups face when attempting to use the healthcare system.
**Interior Proposals for Senior Management:**

The ethnic makeup of the town of Plymouth has been changing for the last ten years, and with the change in the ethnic makeup also comes a change in the overall culture of the population. These cultural changes may include language barriers, shifts in religious beliefs, overall changes in health literacy, and overall trust regarding healthcare itself. The major cultural change is the overall trust of the healthcare system. Greenland hospital had experienced strong community loyalty prior to the influx of ethnic minorities, but this has diminished. This may have to do with the fact that historically, minorities are often stereotyped and receive a lower quality of care than Caucasians. According to CNBC (2017), “minorities get more health tests and treatments that have been identified as unnecessary and economically inefficient, as well as potentially harmful”. These treatments are most often misdiagnosed and direct results of stereotyping. This stereotyping may be diminished in some capacity by staffing the hospital with individuals that better reflect the populations' demographics. Consequentially, according to the case study description, Greenland has neglected to staff correctly. For the past 10 years, its senior management has not changed despite concurrent changes in the population. If Greenland hospital began to diversify at all levels, top to bottom, some disparities may begin to be broken down. As a result of correctly staffing, Language barriers can be reduced by staffing the hospital with Spanish speaking nurses (NURSE, 2018) and minorities will become “more satisfied with their care when treated by a health professional of their own racial or ethnic background” (Ramussen College, 2017). Senior management should also consider creating a cross-cultural training program in order to help break down cultural barriers and to help identify implicit biases. As a result of diversification, minorities will receive a better quality of care and will build a better rapport with the hospital, thus increasing trust between provider and recipient and creating loyalty with this brand new population makeup. Cross-cultural training will also help non-minority providers better understand their patients as well as reduce overall conflict that may arise due to cultural differences.
Exterior Proposals for Senior Management:

Redefining the healthcare dynamics within the hospital is a great first step in regaining hospital utilization, but there is more to be done. To regain that loyalty and trust that Greenland hospital was so proud to have, they must look to the exterior and begin to integrate with their community in different ways. Firstly, Greenland hospital should take a look at a study found in the National Library of Medicine. The study finds that “Households with economic growth are better off in comparison with households without economic growth, in terms of both the healthcare expenditure as a percentage of total expenditure and the utilization of higher quality healthcare services” (NCBI, 2013). Another study by ABC news also goes onto say that “1 in 5 Americans are going without healthcare” (ABC, 2017) because they simply cannot afford to pay for it. These studies can give some reasoning as to why Greenland hospital has suffered a loss in utilization. The economy of the region has deteriorated, and with that, the ability to pay for copays, the ability to pay for premiums, and so on. Greenland hospital doesn’t have that capability to create direct economic growth for the region, but they have the capability to lessen the number of individuals avoiding healthcare altogether. What Greenland can do is create a pre-visit-consultation and post-discharge call center. The main goal of this call center would be so Plymouth citizens could find out if the symptoms that they are displaying would require a hospital visit as well as ensuring that discharged patients follow their discharge plans. If a call center were created, Greenland hospital would see non-urgent ER episodes reduced as well as a decrease in readmission rates (Rethink health, 2018), thus cutting costs on both ends of the healthcare dynamic. Another way that Greenland can attempt to better integrate with the community could be through a “rebranding campaign”. This campaign would occur in the form of a rewrite of the hospitals' vision and mission statement, informational sessions, and community outreach. The rewrite of Greenland’s vision and mission statement should include promises of attaining diversity, providing equitable care, and keeping the income of their patients in mind. The informational sessions would emphasize Greenland hospitals’ vision and mission statement, the newly created call center, its recent diversification of all staff, and finally its efforts in reaching out to the community. On the end of community outreach, Greenland hospital should consider distributing free flu vaccines, creating transportation services to and from local nursing homes, and delivering bilingual informational pamphlets to local hubs such as the
Plymouth Wal-Mart and school. Through the vision and mission statement rewrite, informational sessions and community outreach, Greenland should be able to better connect with minority groups, regain trust and loyalty from the local community, and increase utilization numbers.

**Conclusion and Outlook:**

Greenland hospital has the capability to attain increased utilization rates if the proposals are implemented correctly. By creating programs that focus on diversification and cultural training, Greenland will be able to provide a better quality of care for those of minority populations. It is vital for Greenland to focus on improving services for their minority populations because eventually, the USA will become “a majority-minority country” (Baltimore Sun, 2017), meaning that minorities will make up the majority of the population. In terms of adjusting to the economy of the community, Greenland should pursue the recommendations for community integration. The economy is cyclical, so eventually, the economy of Plymouth may rebound, but Greenland should prepare for the worst. If Greenland follows the recommended community integration proposals, they will be better prepared in servicing during economic downturns and they will cut cost on both ends of the healthcare spectrum. Greenland must not lose sight of their goals and must implement both internal and external recommendations. By turning a blind eye to either the economy or diversification, Greenland will continue to lose the loyalty and trust of the community and will ultimately fail in its efforts to rectify its decreasing utilization numbers.
References


