



## Case study: Houston Northwest Medical Center

### The Situation

In 2005, the leadership at Houston Northwest Medical Center realized that it was suffering significant inefficiencies due to the excessive average length of stay that patients experienced. In February 2005, the average length of stay for Medicare patients was 6.99 days and the hospital average was 5.71 days.

Working together with Intercede Health, the Hospital undertook analysis to identify the root causes of the problem. A series of physician profiles were constructed, which compared the average length of stay of individual physicians with a benchmark figure adjusted for severity of illness. This showed that some physicians were accruing 300 excess bed days per annum, and there was an acceptance among physicians and families that patients could spend extra days in hospital for social or family reasons that were unrelated to medical necessity.

### Outcomes

By instituting a change program lead by Dr. Louis Roddy, the causes for inefficiencies in care were identified and eliminated. Each case was reviewed for effectiveness.

From January 2005 to October 2007, Houston Northwest has achieved:

- 17.5% reduction in length of stay for Medicare patients
- 10.3% reduction in length of stay for all admissions
- 11,735 bed days saved for Medicare patients
- \$12.9 million estimated savings from reduction in length of stay for all admissions

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“Length of Stay is an important issue that affects the viability of a hospital. Excess length of stay compromises services and reduces the ability of the hospital to grow programs.”

*Drew Kahn, CEO Houston Northwest Medical Center*

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