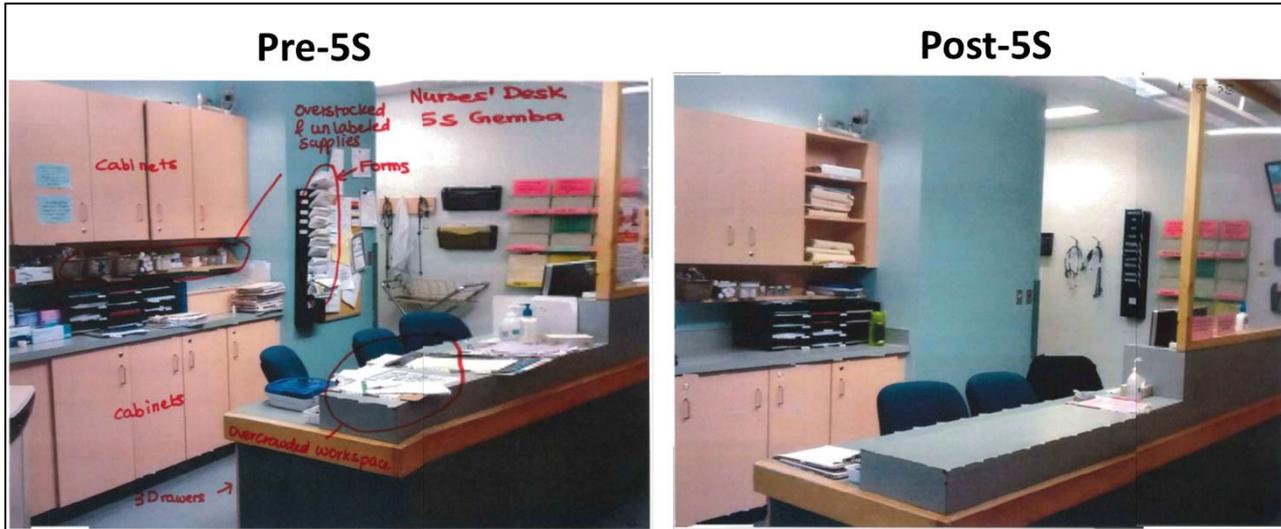




Putting Patients First

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Improved Work Spaces: Organizing the Nursing Desk in the La Loche Emergency Room



A key concept in Lean is making our workspaces more visual. A visual workspace has many benefits – making it easier to find things, making it more obvious when something is abnormal, and improving communication among the team.

One of the tools for creating a more visual workspace is 5S. 5S is an approach that systematically goes through five steps to improve a workspace:

- **Sort:** Going through all the items in an area to determine what is needed and what is not needed.
- **Simplify:** Looking at ways to make it easier to find and use the area – such as better cues for re-ordering supplies, tape outlines to show where items go, etc.
- **Sweep:** Sweep means cleaning the area, inspecting for any broken or expired supplies, and setting up the area so that anyone can do a quick “visual sweep” to make sure the changes are being maintained.
- **Standardize:** Standardize focuses on creating consistent processes to make sure the gains are held. This could be standard work for how supplies are ordered, or a process for auditing the area on a regular basis.
- **Self-discipline:** The last step is self-discipline. This is the commitment of everyone that uses the area to keep it in order and help solve any problems that might arise. Those that helped 5S the area are not the ones who have to keep it in check – everyone has a responsibility to sustain the changes.

In the photos above are before and after pictures of a 5S that was done at the Nursing Desk in the La Roche Emergency Department (Keewatin Yatthé Regional Health Authority). The 5S team included a licensed practical nurse, an RN and a nurse educator, and a patient care coordinator. They also had involvement and input from the area manager and director.

Why did the team embark on a 5S improvement? There were a few challenges that staff members were having with the area:

- Workspace was overcrowded and disorganized with patient files, x-rays, and medical supplies all being stored at the desk.
- No process or consistent location for storing items.
- Space wasn't being used to its full potential.
- Communication board in area was cluttered with many pieces of outdated information. Some of the notices made it difficult to see patients.
- Privacy concerns about patient files not being properly stored.
- Safety concerns about medical supplies and medications that were easy to access – especially since the desk was not attended at all times.

Over the course of the 5 days, the team was able to:

- Free up counter and cabinet space by removing excess, outdated, or unneeded items.
- Organize materials using hanging folders, labelled binders, and open shelving.
- Remove cabinet doors for extra space.
- Repurpose a nearby storage room for medical supplies that shouldn't be easily accessed by patients and visitors.
- Label medical supplies and paperwork so staff would know where everything should go.
- Develop a "medications list" to keep an inventory of meds in stock (to avoid meds being overstocked or out-of-date).
- Create a standard process for staff to file paperwork in designated locations.

At the end of the week, the team had made some great improvements with their changes:

- They decreased their inventory in almost all areas –from between 5% to 68% decrease in items.
- They improved safety by 100%, by moving high-risk medications to secured areas.

In your small groups, review the discussion questions.

Idea Summary Sheet

Employee/Area	Problems	Measures Taken	Results
La Roche E.R. Desk	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Overcrowded communication with numerous out-dated and unused information - Posters on window obstructing patients' view. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Removed the communication board, which is to be replaced by a white board for communication to patients and staff. - Removed posters from window. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - White board serves as a space for communication to patients and staff with flexibility. - Clear view of board.

Before Improvement

After Improvement

Remarks: *White board is on order and will be placed on wall by end of February 2015*

Note: Rev 01192012

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