An Award-winning Hospital Elevates the Quality and Safety of Their Women’s Healthcare Line.

BACKGROUND: St. David’s North Austin Medical Center

St. David’s North Austin Medical Center (NAMC), was recently named one of The Top 100 Hospitals in the nation by Truven Health Analytics. The 332 bed multi-specialty, acute care facility is dedicated to the highest level of women’s health services. Services include maternity and newborn care with Level I, II and III nurseries at the adjacent $83-million St. David’s Women’s Center of Texas. They also offer a 24-hour emergency department, heart and vascular center, neurology and neurosurgery, a kidney transplant program, inpatient and outpatient surgery, and acute inpatient and outpatient rehabilitation.

CHALLENGE: Providing Affordable, Quality Women’s Healthcare in a Safe Environment

St. David’s North Austin Medical Center was faced with the task of elevating the quality and safety of women’s healthcare in a financially viable and sustainable way while addressing obstacles in women’s healthcare such as increased costs, a shortage of OB/GYNs and a rise in uninsured and unassigned patients.

SOLUTIONS: Implementing an On-site Hospitalist Program

NAMC addressed the challenge by partnering with the largest dedicated OB/GYN hospitalist provider and original architect of the Obstetric Emergency Department (OBED), Ob Hospitalist Group (OBHG). They implemented an on-site hospitalist program. OBHG’s highly-skilled, Board Certified OB/GYNs staff a dedicated OBED 24 hours a day, 365 days a year. The hospitalists help both the patient and private OB/GYNs by providing an extra level of care.

The OBHG program provides St. David’s North Austin Medical Center with the professional coverage needed to improve emergency outcomes, limit nurse liabilities, and reduce overall hospital malpractice exposure. OBHG hospitalists also provide physician services to patients admitted to NAMC who do not have an established relationship with an OB/GYN physician. Some OBHG hospital partners have been able to reduce their insurance reserves or premium requirements.

The presence of an OBHG program has elevated the quality and safety of women’s care at St. David’s North Austin Medical in the following areas:

- Postpartum Hemorrhage Protocols; an OBHG hospitalist is called to all postpartum hemorrhages
- Supervision of Ebb intrauterine balloon implementation
- OB Rapid Response Team participation
- Decreased unattended deliveries
- Caring for Maternal Fetal Medicine patients

The OBHG program at St. David’s North Austin Medical Center supports the obstetric providers by providing call coverage options for work/life balance; triage support for improved productivity, surgical assistance to improve outcomes, providing unassigned coverage maximizing practice profitability and building trust as a non-competitor to the local provider. St. David’s North Austin Medical Center has had much greater success in recruiting physician’s to their facility since the introduction of the OBHG program.
Support from the Ob Hospitalist Group enhanced recruitment and development of St. David’s North Austin Medical Center’s Maternal Fetal Medicine (MFM) group. The MFM program was successfully initiated in 2010; 2012 witnessed the recruitment of the fourth (4th) MFM physician. Recruitment and growth can be attributed to the existence of an Ob Hospitalist Group program permitting the hospital to offer MFM a work/life option of a consultancy practice, with the hospitalist team assuming primary care responsibilities for these often high-risk pregnancies.

The contributions and partnership between the MFM, Neonatology and Ob Hospitalist Group has led to a significant increase in demand for women’s and infant services. The NICU at St. David’s North Austin Medical Center has increased by 49% (from 19 beds in 2008 to 39 beds in 2012 and projected to increase.

NAMC established an antepartum unit in 2010 and are planning an expansion of the unit to one of the first Antepartum Intensive Care Units in the state.

Austin Area OB/GYN (AAOBGYN) practice sought to move their practice deliveries from Seton Medical Center to NAMC after the arrival of an Ob Hospitalist Group program. The ability to eliminate main Emergency Room coverage as a requirement for all OB/GYN physicians (as it has been assumed by OBHG) was one of many favorable deciding factors (including providing a MFM program) prompting AAOBGYN to leave Seton Medical Center after thirty years of affiliation.

The OBHG model is predicated on the creation of an Obstetric Emergency Department. The OBED affords St. David’s North Austin Medical Center an opportunity to offset the cost of an obstetric hospitalist program. The presence of a physician 24 hours a day, 365 days a year, fulfills one of the final requirements for an area previously utilized as an obstetric triage (outpatient) to be transformed and billed as an OBED. St. David’s North Austin Medical Center realized substantial revenue gain by charging and collecting OBED facility charges.

The revenue betterment was not limited to NAMC. According to Wes Fountain, CFO for St. David’s North Austin Medical Center, the lessons learned and the financial gain from implementing an obstetric hospitalist program at St. David’s North Austin Medical Center, were implemented across all HCA hospitals.

"The program at our hospital has been a huge success and has contributed to the highly successful opening of St. David’s Women’s Center of Texas and the development of a rapidly growing Maternal Fetal Medicine program dedicated to our hospital."

Chief Medical Officer,
St. David’s North Austin Medical Center

RESULTS:

**Additional financial gains attributed to the presence of OBHG:**

- Increased revenue with the generation of OBED facility charges
- Medical Malpractice reductions; no claims since the implementation of the program
- Recruitment of new physicians to the hospital
  - Maternal Fetal Medicine with maternal transfers (150/month)
  - AAOBGYN and their 1800 deliveries/year
- Earned media through marketing of the obstetric hospitalist program

**Additional efficiency gains:**

- Increase nursing skill-set and training through patient safety drills lead by OBHG
- A two-fold increase in deliveries from 300 to 600 a month
- An 89% increase in NICU beds with plans to add more
- An increase from zero to 180 transfers per year – more than any other hospital in Austin, TX
- The addition of three perinatologists on staff (from zero)