



Chapter 2

Hardwiring for Flow:

Key Strategies for Improving Flow

“Every system is perfectly designed to produce the results it produces.”

- Berwick, 1996

“A Primer on Leading the Improvement of Systems”



The Seven Key Strategies for Improving Flow Are:

1. Demand-capacity management
2. Real-time monitoring of patient flow
3. Forecasting service demand
4. Queuing theory
5. The theory of constraints
6. Managing variation
7. System appreciation

Demand-Capacity Management

- When demand is lower than the capacity of the healthcare system, resources will be underutilized.
- Match capacity to demand in two ways:
 1. Smoothing patient demand, or
 2. Matching service capacity to meet it.

Demand-Capacity Management Strategies

Managing Demand

- Scheduling
- Partitioning/segmenting demand
- Developing complementary services
- Offering price incentives
- Developing reservation systems
- Promoting off-peak demand

Managing Supply

- Customer participation
- Cross-training
- Shared capacity
- Innovative scheduling and shift work
- Flexibility capacity
- Using part-time employees