



Success Story

Proactive Excellence Leads to Being Excellent!

Memorial Hospital: Critical Care Services
Chattanooga, Tennessee

You can't always wait to *react* in healthcare. More often than not, providing excellent care means giving away excellence before anyone even asks for it—*proactive* excellence. All the more so in Critical Care facilities; they're not called 'critical' for nothing! Already named by Solucient in the 100 Top Cardiac Hospitals, Memorial Hospital is no stranger to success, but their Critical Care Services have all but redefined what success really means with their almost unbelievably high scores.

Memorial Hospital's Critical Care Services achieved many of the highest scores *ever* measured by HealthStream Research. After an exhaustive search HealthStream Research's national database, Memorial Hospital's Critical Care Services came out on top, setting bold new records on numerous attributes.

"All who have accomplished great things have had a great aim, have fixed their gaze on a goal which was high, one which sometimes seemed impossible."

Orison Swett Marden (1850 - 1924)
Founder of Success Magazine

Intensive Care Units tend to score *very* high in comparison to other units. After all, when a patient goes into ICU and is later discharged, you can bet the patient is quite thrilled to be alive and is quick to shower accolades upon those responsible. Even when compared to other critical care facilities, Memorial Hospital had so many perfect scores (as in, perfect 5.00!) in their first Critical Care Services patient satisfaction pilot survey that HealthStream Research's expert analysts even felt compelled to double and triple-check the data. "Hey, this *can't* be right. I want to take a closer look at this," said Adam Soran, Research Analyst for HealthStream Research, as he began studying their data with *extreme* intensity.

Needless to say, the extraordinary scores were completely correct, and Mr. Soran and many others around HealthStream Research's headquarters continue to look at Memorial Hospital's scores deep respect.

Critical care units around the nation should take heed and look to Memorial Hospital for an abundance of best practices. As this is Memorial Hospital's first survey that provided breakout scores for their Critical Care Services, we can look forward to reporting on even more future success!

What They Accomplished

All of Memorial Hospital's critical care units scored extremely high, but special attention must be brought to their Cardiac-ICU (CICU) in particular. Their CICU's lowest score on any of the attributes was a 4.71, a score that many hospitals (even many other critical care facilities) would be proud to receive on *any* attribute! Of the twelve attributes rated for CICU, there were only three where Memorial Hospital's CICU *didn't* receive a 5.00!

"Previously, our 50 beds were the only ones not being specifically surveyed. We felt that if our focus was truly on providing the very best patient care, we had to break out the scores for our

Critical Care Services,” said Poulson. “We truly wanted to see how we could improve our patient care”.

Spanning across ratings for skill, kindness, teamwork, and stellar housekeeping services, below is a list of the attributes where Memorial Hospital’s CICU achieved *perfect* scores.

Memorial Hospital: <u>Cardiac-ICU</u> Attributes	Score
The kindness shown by the patient care staff to family and friends	5.00
How well the staff treated the patient as a person and not just a medical condition	5.00
The kindness shown to family and friends by the doctor	5.00
How well the patient care staff kept family informed about the patient's care and treatment	5.00
How well the nurses, doctors and other staff worked together as a team	5.00
The cleanliness of the hospital	5.00
The hospital's responsiveness to your complaints or concerns	5.00
The overall quality of care provided in the ICU	5.00
Likelihood to recommend the hospital	5.00

Memorial Hospital’s other critical care units were still nothing less than stellar in this initial patient satisfaction survey. Below are the overall scores for all of Memorial Hospital’s critical care units.

Composite Scores for Memorial Hospital's <u>Critical Care Services</u> Attributes	Score
How quickly the patient care staff responded to requests	4.92
The kindness shown by the patient care staff to family and friends	4.96
How well the staff treated the patient as a person and not just a medical condition	4.96
The kindness shown to family and friends by the doctor	4.89
How well the patient care staff kept family informed about the patient's care and treatment	4.92
How well the nurses, doctors and other staff worked together as a team	4.81
The cleanliness of the hospital	4.70
The hospital's responsiveness to your complaints or concerns	4.85
The overall quality of care provided in the ICU	4.97
Overall satisfaction	4.90
Likelihood to recommend the hospital	4.92
Your trust of the facility to always provide high quality care	4.79

Every one of their critical care units performed at amazing levels. Their MICU had three attributes with perfect 5.00 scores, and their SICU was in the 99th national percentile in *eight* attributes!

How They Did It

The path Memorial Hospital’s Critical Care Services has taken brought them success in *multiple* areas. Here is their roadmap to Excellence!

Proactive Excellence—“If a patient or family member *asks* for an update, we almost feel as if we’ve failed! We strive to provide excellent service before anyone else has time to ask

first.” said Poulson. “Just talk to the family and find out their concerns. Any health care provider that does this will be well rewarded. If we do receive a complaint, we strive to resolve the issue within 24 hours.”

Patient Family Advocates—Memorial Hospital believes that Patient Family Advocates have been essential to their success. “The Patient Family Advocates are responsible for ‘connecting the dots.’ They act as guides, keep the families constantly updated, offer pillows, fetch blankets, get coffee—they make sure that the patients and their families are treated as honored guests. They help us keep the lines of communication between nurses, physicians, patients, and families wide open. It’s amazing what happens when everybody is on the same page. Low scores often come from ‘low’ communication practices, but our Patient Family Advocates are *very proactive*, talking to and helping *everybody*,” said Poulson. “Patient Family Advocates are assigned to areas of crisis and/or high emotions, such as surgery, ICU, or ER.”

Satisfied and Engaged Nurses—“Our nurses *stay*. We strive to provide fair and consistent policies that let them do what they do best: provide excellent care. We recognize the value of agency nurses, but Memorial Health Care System has chosen not to utilize travelers or agency staff at all. This has led to tight camaraderie and a real sense of family, and the patients can feel it,” said Mindy Evans, M-ICU Nurse Coordinator.

Patient and Family-Centered Care—Excellence isn’t only in the hands of the Patient Family Advocates—it’s the *culture* for Memorial Hospital’s Critical Care Services. “Having Patient Family Advocates is just one piece of the puzzle. It takes a *complete* team to succeed and a comprehensive approach to patient and family-friendly policies. Take a look at our visiting policies, for example. Hours are posted, but if there is no emergency then the patient can have visitors. We ask ourselves, ‘What would *we* want in their situation?’ If there is no clinical reason the family can not visit, the family *should* visit. Medical professionals like structure, order, and predictability—but we believe that any chaos coming from giving patients the very best care often clearly worth it,” said Poulson.

Dedicated Housekeeping Staff—By having housekeeping staff assigned to specific critical care units, Memorial Hospital has created a strong family environment. It’s also a successful arrangement, as ‘cleanliness’ scored a 4.70 across all of their critical care units, and their CICU scored a 5.00 for this attribute. “Each critical care unit has a dedicated Environmental Services Associate, and when you see the same people every day, you really do become like a family. They provide rapid room-turnaround, and since they are dedicated to a specific area they gain full mastery of everything that needs to be done. They are also responsible for far more than the cleanliness scores. They take the time to talk with the patients and their families. They pray with patients. Yes, it takes a doctor to perform surgery . . .but anybody with kindness in their heart can say hello, smile, provide human contact, and simply be there to help. Whether it’s a Patient Family Advocate, nurse, physician, administrator, or housekeeping staff, we all take responsibility for helping the mind, body, and spirit of the patients,” said Poulson.

Church Food Ministry—“This was an idea that took on a life of its own! We began with a single church, and they would bring meals to the patients in our critical care units. Now,

we have so many churches signed up to do this that we have a *waiting list*. We have a different church every day. Leftovers go into baskets and are given to families in hard times,” Connie Dawdy, Patient Advocate explains.

“HealthStream Research provided us with a fantastic survey customized to our special needs, and they were a great resource for determining the best data collection methodologies. In the end, we were just as happy with HealthStream Research as we were with our amazing survey results! It was great to finally see how our specific critical care units were scoring, instead of having their scores rolled up with the entire hospital report,” said Rhonda Poulson, Patient Care Director for Critical Care Services. “It is one thing to *believe* an individual unit is doing well. It is quite another to see proof.”

Proactive Excellence . . . mix that up with great teamwork, and you’ve got a great recipe for the highest levels of excellent care. “We—and I mean *everybody*—think, plan, and act as a *team*. I suppose it shouldn’t be surprising that we succeeded in so many different areas. And we spread these numbers around to everybody. Who would want to hide success like *this*?” said Poulson.