The nursing staff at a Tennessee medical center struggled with processes, systems and workflow that impacted their ability to spend time at the patient’s bedside. A study performed on the unit revealed that approximately 31% of a nurse’s day was dedicated to activities that were considered non-value added or waste. Extra supply trips, searching for equipment and waiting for medications were significant factors interrupting the nurse’s flow and decreasing bedside time for patients. In total, 45% of nursing time was spent on tasks related to patient care while the remaining 55% was directed towards regulatory tasks and waste.

In order to address the sources of waste impacting daily activities on the nursing floor, the Kaizen team employed the Lean workplace redesign methodology, or using 5S principles and Work Standardization to remove waste from daily activities on the nursing floor by placing commonly used supplies at the point of use, standardization of medication scanning processes and organization of the workplace for improved flow.

**The Solution**

The initial phase of the workplace redesign was focused on the standardization of patient rooms and placement of supplies at the point of use. A model room layout was created to standardize the type and quantity of stocked supplies as well as the placement of equipment in the patient room. An inventory list was created and posted in each supply cabinet to visually display the correct location and amount of each stocked item.

With the layout and stock quantities for each room standardized, a team of nurses took on the task of replicating the model room conditions throughout the floor. The end result was a standard patient room layout with needed supplies at the point of use. Nurses and staff immediately recognized the potential to reduce the need to return to the central supply room for commonly used items.

In addition to the standardization and stocking of patient rooms, 5S principles were applied to the remainder of the floor to improve the flow of work for the nursing staff. Pictured below are the results of 5S application to the floor’s equipment room which was previously a source of frustration as nurses attempted to find and access needed equipment.

**Outcomes**

- Standardized patient room layout and equipment
- Patient supplies stocked at the point-of-use
- 43% overall waste reduction
- 30% increase in care related activities
- 27% increase in bedside time
- 12% decrease in wasted motion (steps)

**Breakdown of Nurse’s Time**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Waste</th>
<th>Regulatory</th>
<th>Direct Care</th>
<th>Indirect Care</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>16%</td>
<td>31%</td>
<td>29%</td>
<td>24%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

43% less waste  
30% more care activities  
27% more bedside time