

# Executive Rounding as a Management Strategy

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Drive Patient Satisfaction and Staff Engagement by Creating a Culture of Rounding



# Drive Patient Satisfaction and Staff Engagement



## INTRODUCTION

Purposeful rounding, which occurs when nursing staff members carry out patient rounds whilst demonstrating behaviors that offer empathy, deep listening, and understanding, is a proactive way to promote quality care and patient safety. It is widely considered an effective method for building relationships and trust in addition to meeting a patient's physical needs. Studies have shown the positive benefits of frequent and purposeful rounding on patients, including improved patient satisfaction, reduced call light usage, and reduced incidents such as falls.<sup>1-3</sup>

Creating a culture of rounding is, however, not an easy feat. Some of the commonly encountered challenges that nurses face daily include multiple demands on their time, staff changes, systematic follow-up on patient needs, constant documentation, and maintaining focus while simultaneously addressing new priorities (e.g. implementation of an electronic medical record system).

Executive rounding is the process whereby senior leaders leave their offices to round on patients throughout the hospital to role model positive behaviors for employees, and hear patients' feedback directly. Many organizations have found that implementing leadership rounding, in particular executive rounding, as an integral part of their rounding strategy helps embed a deeper adoption for good rounding practices at all levels.

*Executive rounding is similar to the Gemba Walk philosophy of "Go, See and Observe". It is an effective Lean tool utilized by leaders at many types of organizations to continuously pursue performance excellence.*

**In this whitepaper, we will explore the following aspects of leadership rounding programs:**

- The Value of Leadership Rounding on Patients
- What a Leadership Rounding Program Looks Like
- How to Create a Successful Leadership Rounding Program



## THE VALUE OF LEADERSHIP ROUNDING ON PATIENTS

There is clear evidence that when leaders round, patient satisfaction levels improve. Stephanie Baker<sup>4</sup> described nurse leader rounds as a foundational evidence-based leadership practice “proven to deliver strong service, clinical and operational results.” She indicated that this leadership practice allowed leaders to proactively ensure the delivery of safe, high quality care, harvest recognition opportunities and identify improvement opportunities. Summarized evidence from one hospital Emergency Department showed that the implementation of this leadership practice was associated with patient satisfaction gains from the 16th to 78th percentile five months after implementation.

In a separate publication, Che Walker<sup>5</sup> described the impact of implementing nurse leader rounds in an Oregon hospital. The hospital sustained a differential of 50 percentile points or more when compared nationally in overall patient satisfaction. Patients who recalled that a nurse leader visited them during their stay reported much higher levels of overall satisfaction than those who did not recall a visit from a nurse leader during their stay.

When rounding is performed as a management strategy, hospitals see a rapid rise in patient and staff satisfaction levels.

### Additional benefits of leader rounding:

- ✓ It allows executives to hear first-hand about the reality of the patient’s experience. This knowledge facilitates agile and effective executive **decision-making**.
- ✓ It enables leadership to communicate a **focused message** to patients, the community, and the frontline staff, or to ask focused questions about a specific issue.
- ✓ Rounding by senior leaders **sets a precedent** for all managers to round on their own areas, at other times.

*“Patients who recalled that a nurse leader visited them during their stay reported much higher levels of overall satisfaction than those who did not recall a visit from a nurse leader during their stay.”*

*-Che Walker<sup>5</sup>*



## LEADERSHIP BEHAVIORS TO ENCOURAGE

To drive success through your leadership rounding program, there are certain behaviors leaders should demonstrate. By exhibiting the behaviors outlined below, leaders help drive a positive culture that enable purposeful rounds at all levels of the organization.

### 1. COMMITMENT

Consistency is key. You won't be visible if you're only occasionally rounding; so develop a routine and stick with it.

### 2. EFFECTIVE LISTENING SKILLS

Listening is important so you obtain important information, understand what's going on in your organization, and learn about challenges and positive results.

### 3. SELF-AWARENESS

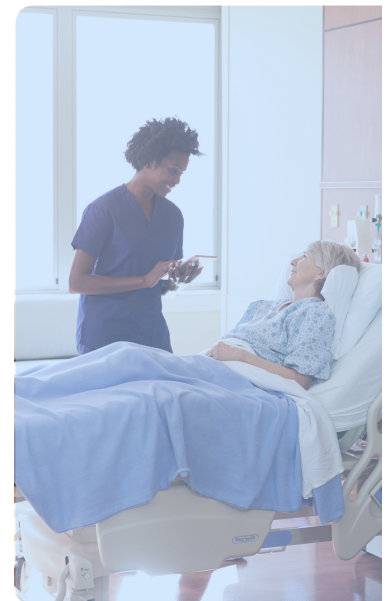
Being self-aware, or conscious, of what you know and don't know makes you more open to learning from your colleagues, staff and patients.

## WHAT TO ASK WHEN ROUNDING

As outlined in the tips above, it is a general best practice to ask four to five open-ended questions. These questions refrain from limiting the potential responses and encourage patients to share candid dialogue.

### Here are four questions that work:

1. What is the most important item we should consider when planning and prioritizing your care?
2. How have you and your family members been included in making decisions about your care including making sure your questions are answered in a way that you can understand?
3. "Can you explain to me, what is the next step in your care?"
4. If you were the CEO of this hospital, what would be one thing you would like to improve? This can include members of your care team or anything that could serve you better.





## THE IMPORTANCE OF IDENTIFYING OPPORTUNITY AREAS

As part of your executive rounding program, you should encourage patients and staff members to voice concerns that help your team identify opportunity areas for improvement. Identifying areas for process improvement demonstrates leadership commitment to providing the tools and equipment to do the job in the most efficient way possible. This means looking for ways to improve patient understanding of care plans, employee workflows, and organization communication.

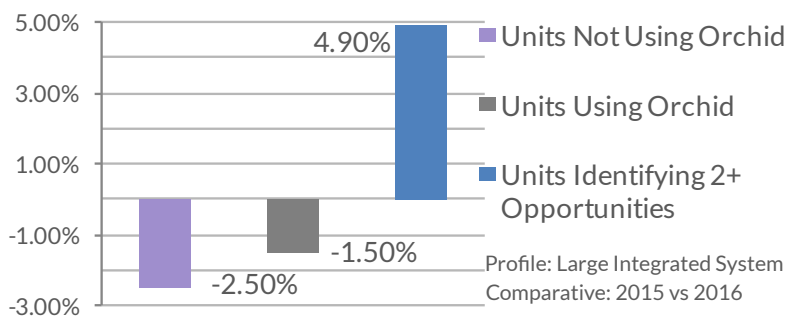
According to a study by the Murphy Leadership Institute<sup>6</sup>, about 35% of all hospital employees' time is spent on wasteful work. The tasks considered wasteful work included inefficient shift-to-shift or departmental reports, locating equipment, waiting for physicians, meetings that last too long, interruptions by telephone calls, and completing multiple forms for the same task. By observing employee and patient interaction first-hand, leaders can better identify opportunities to reduce wasteful work and improve upon patient and staff experiences.

Additionally, when rounding, patients are encouraged to voice questions or concerns so they can be resolved prior to discharge. To make the most of the rounding program, it is important for executives and other leaders to identify and act on as many opportunity areas as possible.

### Best Practices for Identifying Opportunities During Executive Rounds

- ✓ Ask questions encouraging patients to voice concerns
- ✓ Trigger flags and alerts for prompt issue resolution
- ✓ Use daily huddles to ascertain resolution prior to discharge

Change in HCAHPS Scores Based on Number of Opportunity Areas Identified



The analysis<sup>7</sup> of more than 57,000 rounds at a large integrated health system highlights the importance of focusing on quality over quantity of rounds. Meaningful rounds help uncover and address patient concerns that improve satisfaction. Results showed that units that identified two or more opportunity areas per patient saw the greatest improvement in HCAHPS scores.

On top of demonstrating to staff that their senior leaders are approachable and reliable, proactively identifying opportunity areas correlate to higher HCAHPS. Negative responses provide the opportunity to clarify information such as medication instructions. By answering questions and clarifying care points, leaders show they are listening to patients and improve patients' overall experiences.



## LEADERSHIP ROUNDING IN ACTION

A look at how leading organizations are prioritizing objectives with executive rounding:



### MIAMI-BASED ACADEMIC MEDICAL CENTER

#### Creating a Culture of Rounding to Drive Deep Adoption

At the academic medical center, Joint Commission Tracer rounds and Nurse Manager rounds were the first rounds prioritized for digital enhancements, however, leaders soon realized that in order to drive wider success, they needed to lead by example. Leaders began executive rounds on patients to instill a strong rounding culture and role model positive behaviors.

Within a year of implementing the leader rounding initiative, 25 different types of rounds were introduced, helping drive improvements in more areas in the hospital. By instilling a strong culture of rounding, hospital leaders were able to expand the digital program and see results. As a way to capture as much information as possible executive leaders have found that asking high level questions is best for uncovering recurring issues and creating a meaningful dialog between executive leaders and managers.



### NEW YORK-BASED LARGE INTEGRATED HEALTH SYSTEM

#### Protected Hour to Encourage Executive Rounding

At this health system, the executive team rounds every Friday during a protected hour called “LEAD Rounding” to focus on patient experience and safety. The LEAD rounds focus on making sure the patient is receiving care in the way that is most important to them and that everything is understandable to both them and their family.

Leaders are encouraged to record patient preferences that can be discoverable to other members of the care team to provide a truly customized hospital stay.

*The above hospitals use CipherHealth's Orchid digital rounding solution to streamline the rounding process, track information, and close the loop on patient issues.*





# TIPS FOR CREATING A SUCCESSFUL EXECUTIVE ROUNDING PROGRAM AT YOUR ORGANIZATION

To ensure that executive or leadership rounding becomes a tool that improves quality, safety, communication, and patient experience, there are a number of actions that successful.

1

## Collect Information Directly From Patients

Get into the habit of rounding to collect information directly from patients. When executives are isolated, information is filtered as it slowly travels up the chain.

3

## Ask Few, But Useful Questions

There is no need to ask too many questions. Unless data is being gathered on a very specific organization initiative, asking open-ended questions allows the collection of more meaningful information into improvement areas.

5

## Set a Goal

When instituting a routine executive rounding program to support unit leaders and role-model positive behaviors to employees, realistic rounding goals should be set for the leadership team, (e.g. round on 5 patients per week), and progress monitored to ensure program goals are met.

7

## Recognize Work Well Done

It is also crucial to focus on the positives and celebrate jobs well done. Whether directly observed by a patient or informed by a supervisor, publicly acknowledging exceptional deeds can improve the work environment.

2

## Make It Routine

It is critical for leadership rounding to happen on a regularly scheduled basis so all stakeholders involved come to trust the process and view it as an important initiative.

4

## Adopt the AIDET® Communication Framework

AIDET® stands for five communication behaviors: Acknowledge, Introduce, Duration, Explanation, and Thank You. Using AIDET® has been shown to decrease anxiety, increase patient compliance, and improve clinical outcomes.

6

## Immediately Discuss Findings

After meeting patients, the leader should also meet the area staff to discuss his or her findings. It is important to correct observed problems on the spot wherever possible. Otherwise, a structure should be created to follow up on action items.

8

## Drive Visibility and Accountability

Requesting and scheduling rounding reports to support monthly meetings with the executive/ leadership team will ensure that these meetings drive productive discussions and agile decision-making to address any negative trends.



For More Information

- Voice: Automated Outreach
- Orchid: Rounding & Surveys
- View: Care Management
- Case Studies and More

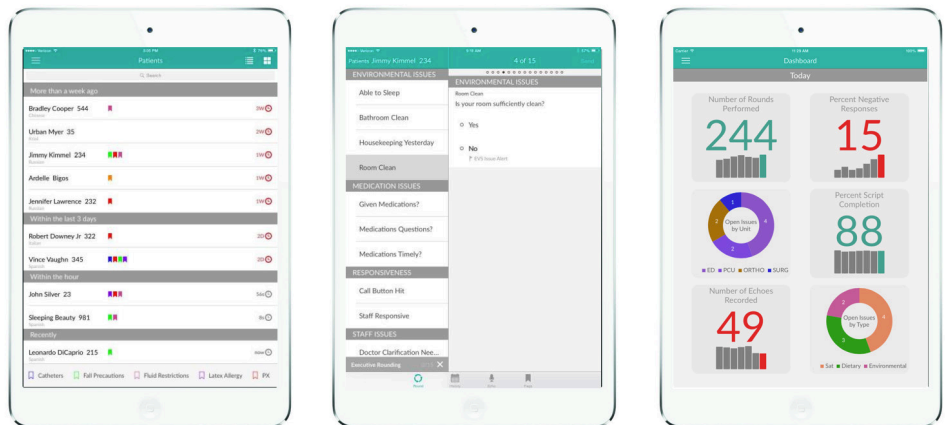
CONCLUSION

Improving the quality and quantity of executive rounding across the organization will help leaders become more proactive problem-solving partners and reap the rewards of consistently high patient and staff engagement. Leaders can further enhance consistency and accountability by implementing a digital rounding technology that drives a higher level of reliability in the rounding process.

Executive rounding increases the level of trust between staff members and patients because senior leaders demonstrate that they are vested in the organization's outcomes by demonstrating an interest in the day-to-day operations. Furthermore, making executive rounds a team effort that includes both nursing and non-nursing leaders enables real-time feedback from patients and families to travel to all departments of the hospital.

If you would like to discuss improving or creating an Executive Rounding program at your hospital, please contact [info@cipherhealth.com](mailto:info@cipherhealth.com).

 For more information on how CIPHERHealth can support your initiatives, visit [www.cipherhealth.com](http://www.cipherhealth.com)



Orchid is the premier digital rounding solution used by leading organizations to streamline the rounding process, identify opportunity areas for improvement, and improve patient and staff experiences.





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7. Case Study: HCAHPS Improvements at Henry Ford Health System. *CipherHealth*; 2016.



## ABOUT CIPHERHEALTH

CipherHealth is a New York City-based company founded in 2009 focused on creating solutions that help care providers effectively and efficiently to provide quality care for their patients. CipherHealth leverages technology to make communication between care providers and patients easier, engaging, and more meaningful.



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