



Value Stream Mapping for Healthcare Made Easy

Cindy Jimmerson

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In no industry is the concept of quality more essential than it is in healthcare, which is why the lean quality principles learned through the example of the Toyota Production System are so applicable. Two fundamental principles of Toyota's push for excellence are especially relevant to healthcare: ensuring quality at every step and keeping improvement processes simple enough that they are viable, reproducible, and teachable.

Developed with the input of more than 60 healthcare organizations, **Value Stream Mapping for Healthcare Made Easy** introduces healthcare managers to the essential method developed by Toyota known as the Value Stream Map (VSM). The first half of the book provides an introduction to VSMs that shows healthcare workers at all levels how to look at any process with eyes that probe all the value-added and non-value-added activities in the delivery of a requested service or product. This will allow all stakeholders the opportunity to evaluate, create, and communicate innovation in their workplace.

The second half reviews real value stream maps at real healthcare facilities created by teams of administrators, managers, physicians, and staff members. Most participants were not experienced with lean thinking and for many this was their first engagement with lean methods. What becomes clear through these examples is the importance of initiating realistic improvements that can quickly demonstrate successful change and encourage even more problem solving.

This ability to be involved with creating a better way to work has been exceptionally well received by workers both at Toyota and now throughout the healthcare industry. Lean thinking involves employees in improving work that is meaningful to them, at a level where they can see and appreciate the changes they have participated in creating. This satisfaction is essential to retaining good workers, as well as to the everyday improvement of safety, patient satisfaction, and affordability.

VSM is a proven high-level view tool that can be used in every aspect of healthcare to identify, understand, and improve processes. Information included illustrates the simplicity and completeness of the tool and describes its applications to staff communication, regulatory documentation, and activities of daily work. The book also highlights simple-to-use data collection and interpretation as part of the VSM process.

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