

## Increasing blood flow at collection centers to gain a competitive edge.

Running a blood center takes the skill and dedication of many people. At every step in the process of recruiting, collecting, and supplying blood components, center staff must use practices that maintain the safety of the blood supply and meet standards for component quality. They must also keep up with the growing demand for components.

Rising deferrals reduce the number of donors available to meet the growing demand for blood components. Therefore, centers must find ways to attract new donors and create a pleasant experience in order to establish and retain regular contributors. Cleanliness, combined with efficient operations, is required to ensure the comfort, confidence and repeat visits of donors. Though little can be done to speed up the process of collecting blood from the donor, it's possible to increase productivity related to set-up and overall processing of each donor. This can be achieved by integrating new technology, improving work space layout, and ensuring the effective utilization of blood center technicians.

## One Northeast blood center rises above the competition

One blood collection center in the Northeast was facing consolidation with one of six other blood centers in the geographic region. Short on time and with constant pressure to improve processes, lower costs, and increase market share, this client requested the services of OpEx to help them establish a LEAN organization. After conducting a two-day, on-site assessment, OpEx realized the first opportunity was to evaluate systems and make operational changes at their three donor sites. OpEx's Implementation Specialists and five members of the blood centers staff began the search for improvement. By capturing the processes and following the Catena® Improvement System to analyze their findings, the team identified multiple areas of waste in their current procedures.



## Data Collection: Sometimes automation wastes valuable time...

Donor centers can employ two different methods to draw blood. They can use a "whole blood" system that involves a technician manually drawing the blood into a bag, which takes approximately 5 to 7 minutes. The total processing time for the procedure is around 20 minutes. The center can also use an automated system, requiring about 60 minutes for the blood to be processed.

While the machine separated the blood, the technician waited. In addition to this wait time, OpEx found major bottle necks in the screening area, as well as effort and time being wasted looking for materials or equipment that should have been readily available.



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### Transformation: A pod system helped raise productivity by 32%!

OpEx worked with the blood center's management to devise a pod system, which allowed the technicians to switch from automated to whole blood procedures in the same location. Now, as the machine collects the required components, the technician could participate in a value adding activity.

OpEx also helped the client institute a "never out" replenishment system and standard work that reduced the amount of time looking for materials.

Finally, the team relieved some of the work load on the screening area, and increased capacity by adding a fourth screening room and establishing a "baton-zone", whereby donor collection technicians moved forward into the screening areas as required.

The result was a more balanced flow for donors visiting the centers, and nearly \$1 million in annual savings, including an estimated \$214,000/year in increased revenue. Also, whole blood turnaround time dropped by 13%, automated blood turnaround time 45%, and overall productivity rose 32%.



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