

Thibodaux Regional Medical Center: Providing a Stellar Patient Experience



Best Practices Case Study



Thibodaux Regional Medical Center, a 185-bed acute care hospital in Thibodaux, LA, has been recognized for the first time by J.D. Power and Associates as a Distinguished Hospital for service excellence and its commitment to providing an “outstanding patient experience.” With an 80-year history, Thibodaux Regional, which began as a community hospital with 26 beds in a church rectory, now is a multi-building medical complex that serves Lafourche Parish and seven surrounding parishes. The medical center resides in the southeastern region of Louisiana, along the banks of the Bayou Lafourche.

Establishing Patient-Centered Benchmarks

Nearly a decade ago, Thibodaux Regional began what it calls its “Journey to Patient-Centered Excellence,” which this year has culminated in the hospital earning recognition as a *J.D. Power and Associates Distinguished Hospital*. “Thibodaux had been a good hospital providing good care, but we wanted to be a great hospital that provides great care,” CEO Greg Stock explains, adding, “We have concentrated on system improvement methodologies such as Lean, Six Sigma and Do-It-Groups (DIGs)—proven process improvement methodologies that are incorporated in our strategic vision for everyone within the organization.” Thibodaux Regional uses these techniques to continuously improve, solve problems and manage change.

First Success Measured with Performance Benchmarks

Thibodaux Regional approached J.D. Power and Associates as a well-known and respected third party to validate its commitment to patient satisfaction and provide credibility and benchmarking in the community and marketplace.

Voice of the Customer And Recognition

Recognition as a J.D. Power and Associates Distinguished Hospital was determined through a number of processes and metrics that included a telephone-based survey of recently discharged patients that asked about patients’ stay and focused on the five key drivers of patient satisfaction with the overall hospital experience—speed and efficiency; dignity and respect; comfort; information and communication; and emotional support. Next, research results were compared to national benchmarks established by the annual *J.D. Power and Associates National Hospital Service Performance Study*.SM

Thibodaux Regional significantly exceeded the national benchmarks for overall satisfaction and performed particularly well, compared with the national study, in the treatment of patients in a speedy and efficient manner, as well as keeping patients comfortable, according to the J.D. Power research data. The medical center also received high ratings on the measures of concern for continued recovery and comfort during procedures. In relation to the national study, Thibodaux Regional also achieved strong scores in the areas of treating patients with dignity and respect—particularly for respect for patient privacy and the courtesy of the discharge personnel. Validation of success in patient satisfaction from J.D. Power and Associates has been a key way for Thibodaux Regional to continue measuring progress as a patient-centric facility and gain recognition and top of mind awareness of its quality of care and service.

Moving from Measurement to Improvement

Thibodaux Regional does not plan to rest on its laurels, but to continue monitoring patient service and quality scores on weekly, monthly, quarterly and annual bases. In addition to

The Journey To Patient-Centered Excellence

Thibodaux Regional, a non-profit medical center, offers specialized services, including heart surgery, radiation oncology, neurology, neurosurgery, plastic and reconstructive surgery, pulmonology, obstetrics and orthopedics, in addition to inpatient and outpatient physical rehabilitation services. With a staff of more than 900 employees, the hospital is served by 115 active staff physicians and at least 110 courtesy, consulting emergency medicine and associate physicians. As a growing regional medical center, Thibodaux Regional is in the third phase of a \$100 million development project that includes construction and renovation to expand the Emergency Department, kitchen and dining facilities, front entrance, gift shop and chapel. Efforts in the design were focused with our patients’ needs in mind. Every aspect of this project has and will help us better serve our patients, their families and our region, according to Greg Stock, CEO.

J.D. Power survey results, Thibodaux Regional also will rely on internal surveys, public perception and community interaction. CEO Greg Stock also points out that the hospital's progress can be measured in overall patient volume growth on a year-over-year basis.

Acquiring and Retaining Patients

The service excellence distinction, which was determined by surveying recently discharged patients from Thibodaux Regional Medical Center about perceptions of their hospital stay and comparing the results to the national benchmark established by the annual *J.D. Power and Associates National Hospital Service Performance StudySM* can be used in promotional and marketing materials to help retain and acquire new patients. In qualifying for Distinguished Hospital recognition, Thibodaux Regional Medical Center received an overall Hospital Performance Service Index (HPSI) score that placed the hospital in the 95th percentile.

For example, a majority (80%) of Thibodaux Regional Medical Center patients say they intend to recommend the medical center to others, according to J.D. Power patient satisfaction research, and 83% say they will return to the facility if needed. Among Thibodaux Regional Medical Center patients, nearly one-half indicate they have "much more" trust and confidence in the medical center after their most recent stay. These findings may be broadcast to the medical center's staff, which also boosts morale.

Keeping the Brand and Pride Alive

Thibodaux Regional Medical Center held a special celebration on January 14, 2009, in the facility's Medical Mall to announce receiving the J.D. Power and Associates Distinguished Hospital Award. To further enhance and define Thibodaux Regional's brand message of quality and patient satisfaction, the medical center is featuring a photo of the award on its Web site home page. Also on the Web site are a news release, an article and a photo of Kevin Lieb, senior director of Provider Programs at J.D. Power and Associates, presenting the award to CEO Greg Stock and the Thibodaux Regional board of commissioners.

In addition, a multi-media campaign (including print, outdoor and radio promotional materials) was developed to communicate Thibodaux Regional Medical Center's recognition as a J.D. Power and Associates Distinguished Hospital. Letters initially announcing the award and thanking the staff were signed by Greg Stock and sent to the homes of all employees. Additionally, letters were sent to all members of the Medical Staff. Banners honoring the Hospital's recognition for service excellence also hang in the hospital lobby.

Patient Satisfaction Helps Gain Share

The J.D. Power and Associates Distinguished Hospital Award for service excellence and patient satisfaction can be leveraged in a number of ways throughout 2009. Recognition positively separates Thibodaux Regional from other healthcare providers and it can be used in marketing materials within the region to help gain market share. Jim Dougherty, executive director of the healthcare practice at J.D. Power and Associates, points out that hospitals such as Thibodaux Regional Medical Center that invest in patient satisfaction and respond to patients' needs also achieve better clinical outcomes as well.

As a Distinguished Hospital, Thibodaux Regional can use its strong patient satisfaction metrics in negotiations with payers and can command better prices on services and offer fewer discounts, Dougherty advises. In addition, national recognition for service excellence bolsters the reputation of the hospital and can be used in marketing activities. CEO Greg Stock said of the *Distinguished Hospital Program*, "Since this recognition, there has been a renewed breath of life in our staff and the public as a whole, and the feeling that Thibodaux Regional is doing the right things, has performed [well] and will continue to perform with a patient-centered focus."

“Success in achieving patient satisfaction is not static. Thibodaux Regional does not accept average or even above-average as an end point. As it reaches each plateau in monitoring performance and service, the bar is immediately pushed higher. We establish new goals and communicate these goals throughout the organization. Our staff rally around these new objectives and we embrace being accountable.”

— Greg Stock, CEO, Thibodaux Regional Medical Center

A Way to Retain High-Caliber Staff

Participating in the *J.D. Power and Associates Distinguished Hospital Program* and receiving recognition for the first time in January 2009 has been a way to "tell our staff that we are making progress in achieving true excellence in patient care," according to CEO Greg Stock. Special T-shirts with the award emblem printed on the front were handed out to each team member. Hospital team members wear these special shirts not only to work but also outside of work in the communities where they live. "The award has instilled a greater sense of pride among the staff. It also reinforces our hospital's commitment to providing quality care and high levels of patient satisfaction."

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