

CASE STUDY: **Ripon Hospital Improves ER Readiness with** Bariatric Electric Stretcher

Facility: Ripon Hospital- Emergency Department

CHALLENGE

Emergency departments must be prepared for a wide range of patient needs, including bariatric care, while minimizing physical strain on staff and maintaining efficient patient flow. Ripon Hospital's ER previously relied on older manual stretchers that required greater physical effort to maneuver, particularly in tight spaces and high-acuity situations.

The hospital sought a solution that would improve maneuverability, staff safety, and preparedness for bariatric patients, without disrupting day-to-day operations.

IMPLEMENTATION

Ripon Hospital introduced a **bariatric electric stretcher** to improve patient transport and staff safety.

Key elements:

- Powered drive to reduce manual pushing
- Electric positioning features (adjustments)
- Designed to support higher-weight patients
- Gradual integration into ER workflows with staff training

Real-World Use & Workflow Optimization

Initial use revealed important operational insights:

- Placement in standard exam rooms created maneuverability challenges
- Tight turns and limited space impacted transport to imaging

Adjustment made: Relocated stretcher to a **trauma room for faster access and better usability.**

Result: Improved workflow efficiency and accessibility for bariatric cases.

OUTCOMES & IMPACT

Improved Maneuverability and Staff Ergonomics

Key Takeaways

- Easier transport compared to legacy stretchers
- More effective movement in open ER pathways
- Requires thoughtful placement in tighter layouts

Staff Feedback

Staff Feedback: "The maneuverability of the stretcher was so much easier than the old Stryker we had."

Reduced Physical Strain & Injury Risk

Key Takeaways

- Reduced pushing and lifting effort
- Lower caregiver fatigue
- Strong alignment with no-lift initiatives
- Patients can remain on stretcher until bariatric bed arrives
- Reduces unnecessary transfers
- Improves efficiency and comfort

Staff Feedback

Staff Feedback: "It takes much of the manual lifting and pushing off the staff."

Leadership Perspective: "This stretcher will help protect our staff from back injuries..." (Supported by Daniell et al., 2014)

Value of Powered Features

Key Takeaways

- Electric adjustments reduce manual effort
- Easier positioning for larger patients
- Improves both patient comfort and staff experience
- Safely accommodates higher-weight patients
- Improves dignity and quality of care
- Enables continuity of care from ER to inpatient

Staff Feedback

"We will appreciate having it when that day comes."

Adoption & Learning Curve

Key Takeaways

- Initial hesitation with advanced features
- Confidence increases with hands-on use
- Training plays a critical role

Staff Feedback

"It took a bit for staff to get used to all the electronic features."

CONCLUSION

The introduction of a bariatric electric stretcher has strengthened Ripon Hospital's Emergency Department by:

- Improving maneuverability and workflow efficiency
- Reducing physical strain and injury risk for staff (Daniell et al., 2014)
- Ensuring readiness for bariatric and high-acuity patients

By combining staff feedback, operational improvements, and strategic alignment, the hospital is well-positioned to continue enhancing both caregiver safety and patient care quality.

COMMUNITY RECOGNITION

Ripon Hospital's investment in bariatric-ready equipment has been recognized within the local community. A feature in the Ripon Commonwealth highlighted the Emergency Department's proactive approach to improving patient care while enhancing staff safety and preparedness for a growing bariatric population. (Ripon Commonwealth Press, n.d.)

Read more: https://www.riponpress.com/news/ssm-health-ripon-donation/article_267d9113-7ec2-4d6c-b84f-bedeae2c3c93.html

STRATEGIC VALUE

- Supports Ripon Hospital's no-lift safety initiative
- Cost-effective solution for teams with limited staff
- Recommended by ER staff for similar facilities
- Reinforces commitment to safe, equitable patient care

REFERENCES

Daniell, N., Merrett, S., & Paul, G. (2014). *Effectiveness of powered hospital bed movers for reducing physiological strain and back muscle activation*. Applied Ergonomics, 45(4), 849–856.

SSM Health Ripon donation supports emergency department improvements. (n.d.). Ripon Commonwealth Press. https://www.riponpress.com/news/ssm-health-ripon-donation/article_267d9113-7ec2-4d6c-b84f-bedeae2c3c93.html