Supporting Our Staff: How to Impact Staff Morale with a Support Our Staff (SOS) Cart

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Initiative

The Specialty Care Services (SCS) Clinics at Children's of Alabama see an average of 18,145 patients a month. In addition to caring for patients during the clinic visit, clinic staff responsibilities also include responding to patient calls and requests, coordinating care across multiple disciplines, and case management. This fast-paced environment with competing demands can lead to emotional fatigue, decreased staff morale, and contribute to feelings of burnout.

Out of concern for staff who overcome these daily challenges, the Support Our Staff (SOS) Cart was conceptualized and implemented. The SOS Cart is a mobile wellness intervention designed to promote staff well-being, team morale, employee engagement, and cultivate a workplace culture rooted in appreciation for clinical staff.

Background

Several SCS Clinic Coordinators and Educators attended the 2024 WE CARE Conference hosted by the University of Alabama at Birmingham (UAB). The conference presented ideas and initiatives to enhance staff resilience and well-being and decrease burnout.

To address concerns related to staff well-being, conference attendees worked in collaboration with the SCS Shared Governance Council, a multi-disciplinary team comprised of members from various clinics and roles from both the main campus and Children's South satellite location, to introduce a cart designed to assist and uplift staff by providing brief, supportive interactions during the workday.

The Shared Governance Council received approval from Leadership, developed a plan, and initiated the Support Our Staff (SOS) Cart in February 2025.

Approach

The SCS Shared Governance Council determined how to design the cart, what to name it, and the frequency and timing for rounding in the clinics. The Council developed a list of items to stock the cart including snacks, self-care items, as well as fun novelty items. The cart is manned by volunteers from the Shared Governance Council and SCS Leadership, including the Clinic Coordinators and Directors. In order to maximize staff interaction, the cart makes surprise visits to clinics at least once a month, varying the day of the week and time of day. Both the main campus and Children's South location utilize a Support Our Staff Cart. The purpose of this evidence-based practice project was to evaluate the effectiveness of the SOS Cart in improving staff perceptions of morale, feeling valued, and overall workplace culture. To assess its impact, an anonymous electronic survey was distributed to all clinic staff after initial implementation in May 2025 and again after sustained cart rounds in November 2025.

Results

Staff reporting indicated that the cart had a positive impact on their workday increasing from 111 of 142 respondents (78%) in May to 199 of 214 (93%) in November ($\chi^2 = 15.13$, $p < 0.001$). Perceived impact on workplace morale improved from 83% in May (61 "significantly improved," 54 "slightly improved") to 93% in November (153 significantly improved, 48 slightly improved; $\chi^2 = 28.53$, $p < 0.001$). Feelings of being valued or appreciated also increased over time, rising from 120 of 139 respondents (86%) in May to 203 of 214 (95%) in November ($\chi^2 = 9.01$, $p = 0.01$).

Overall, results demonstrated significant, measurable improvements in workday positivity, team morale, feeling valued, workplace culture, and employee engagement. All categories showed increases from May to November, with the November survey reflecting approval ratings above 90% in every area.



For more behind the scenes images, scan the QR Code below

Outcomes

These findings demonstrate that the SOS Cart is a low-cost, high-impact strategy that measurably enhances staff well-being, fosters a supportive workplace culture, and strengthens morale within pediatric ambulatory settings.

The significant improvements across all domains highlight the value of brief, visible, and relational wellness interventions in supporting the ambulatory care workforce.

This initiative has transformed the "roll of the cart" into a welcomed sound in the hallway, frequently met with visible excitement and described by nurses and staff as a highlight of their workday.

Future Directions

The SOS Cart will continue visiting clinics to evaluate opportunities for improvement, identify successes, and adjust cart items based on staff feedback. The team will also focus on streamlining the product ordering process, improving rounding efficiency, and recruiting additional volunteers to support ongoing efforts.

The SCS Shared Governance Council has found the SOS Cart to be a great success. The team will continue to look for ways to show appreciation and support for staff.

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