

## SWMC Awarded Rural Healthcare Organization of the Month

Placing focus on perfecting the patient care experience has earned Southwest Medical Center recognition as the Studer Group's Rural Healthcare Organization of the Month for May 2014.

The Studer Group is a consulting group which works with hundreds of hospitals across the country to achieve and sustain clinical, operational and financial success using evidence-based leadership development and patient care tools. Southwest Medical Center's team of employees, physicians and board members agreed to enter into a partnership with the Studer Group in September 2012.

Using Studer Group's patient satisfaction tools, focusing on leadership development and working closely with their coaches, SWMC has achieved sustained improvements in areas of patient care and employee retention. The overall rating of the Emergency Department for 2013 shows a nearly 13 percent increase in patient satisfaction compared to scores prior to SWMC's partnership with the Studer Group in 2012. Employee turnover rates fell nearly 6 percent from 2012 to 2013 while full-time and part-time RN turnover fell 7 percent from 2012 to 2013.

"Every month, Studer Group honors an organization that stands out from its peers and serves as a premier example of what is right in healthcare with a Healthcare Organization of the Month award," Studer Group explained in a letter, "Each recipient is considered a 'Fire Starter' hospital - which is one that keeps the true essence of the organization alive and thriving... Fire Starters ignite the flame of service and caring for others that guides and supports the organization and results in measurable positive outcomes."

Studer Group initiatives implemented at Southwest Medical Center include quarterly Leadership Development Institute training for managers and supervisors, employee forums, hourly rounding on patients, rounding on employees, improved communication with patients, organizational goals, thank you notes, discharge phone calls and more.

"If there's one thing we've learned in our journey with the Studer Group, it's that change can be difficult. However, when you have the right goals, the right team, and the right processes in place, change becomes not only attainable, but very exciting," SWMC President and CEO Bill Ermann said, "Our employees consistently receive comments from patients and visitors that something about Southwest Medical Center is different – that employees go out of their way to assist them or that patient care staff take more time to explain processes to patients and families. Our community is recognizing our efforts and that's the most encouraging sign of all – we are pleased to hear about the positive impact our team has made in improving people's lives."

SWMC press release