



# Creating 1,300 problem solvers

**Trust, collaboration, and a commitment to exceptional care. These have been the guiding principles along St. Mary's General Hospital's journey to embed a Lean culture of continuous improvement for the benefit of patients, healthcare practitioners, staff and hospital partners alike.**

That journey began in 2009 when the Kitchener healthcare facility was first exposed to the Lean philosophy through Ontario's Emergency Department Process Improvement Program (ED-PIP). Piqued by its potential, in 2010 St. Mary's leadership embarked on a tour of the ThedaCare Center in Appleton, Wisconsin, to see first-hand how one of the first hospitals in the world to apply Lean methodologies had achieved better patient care, higher staff satisfaction, reduced wait times, fewer patient safety incidents, and improved care outcomes.

It soon became clear that St. Mary's had much to gain from applying Lean. And so, shortly after returning, senior leadership took the first steps towards implementation in 2011. In those early days, St. Mary's Lean transformation was met with positivity and strong engagement among its 1,300-plus staff. By late 2012, however, that engagement had started to wane and St. Mary's Lean ambitions were at risk of fading away.

It was then that KPMG and Kim Barnas, ThedaCare's former president of Urban Hospitals, were brought on board to support the St. Mary's journey. The team began by working with senior leaders and establishing True North to provide organizational direction and a roadmap that would embed Lean principles with a focus on the patient. Next came the task of getting St. Mary's front line staff engaged with the new way of working. Key to this was the St. Mary's Lean Management System which allowed all staff to support improvements and included proactive planning and people development, unit improvement and leadership, daily continuous improvement, and sustaining the gains.

Thanks to new tools and resources, a re-energized staff, and consistent monitoring, St. Mary's continues to benefit from its Lean transformation. In 2016, Lean methods contributed to a reduction in hospital acquired infections by over 60 percent, patient falls by more than 50 percent, staff injuries by 25 percent, and the average length of stay by greater than 15 percent, among other notable achievements both within the hospital and its community. Staff engagement has also skyrocketed, with over 2,700 staff improvements implemented throughout the hospital in 2016/17 alone (more than two per employee). This new approach has also had a profound effect on St. Mary's Hospital Standardized Mortality Ratio which, twice in the last five years, has been the lowest in Canada.

All told, and thanks to a trusted partnership with KPMG, St. Mary's continues to chart new healthcare territory and progress towards their True North vision.

**We deliver the results that matter.**

