

Building on strength: How Mount Nittany Health improved ED performance

Since 2021, Mount Nittany Medical Center had steadily improved emergency department (ED) flow. When progress began to level off, leaders saw an opportunity to build on that momentum and improve how patients moved through the ED.

Mount Nittany Health partnered with Sound Practice Solutions to bring additional clinical and operational expertise, align existing teams around shared goals, and turn agreed-upon changes into day-to-day practice.

The work focused on two initiatives: improving patient flow and strengthening ED-to-inpatient transitions.

Improving patient flow

Mount Nittany Health and Sound completed a structured, multidisciplinary review of ED workflows, focusing on practical changes the ED team could make to improve throughput and reduce inpatient boarding.

Working with Laboratory, Radiology, Pharmacy, and Inpatient Nursing, the teams helped close workflow gaps and designed a Rapid Assessment Zone tailored to the department's layout and staffing.

That alignment helped speed early clinician engagement and created a clearer path from triage to treatment.

The teams also paired clinicians and nurses in dedicated care pods to strengthen accountability and communication. Using Sound's Demand2Capacity Tool, Mount Nittany Health was able to align staffing to patient demand, creating a more responsive and sustainable model.



Measurable progress: Key ED measures[†]

Over the course of this shared work, Mount Nittany Health improved several key performance measures:

Left without being seen (LWBS):

<1%

ED length of stay (LOS),
treat and release patients:

↓ 6 min.

Room-to-provider time:

↑ 33.3%

Patient experience:
Likelihood to recommend

↑ 6%



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The approach built on what Mount Nittany Health's teams were already doing well while identifying targeted changes that could improve efficiency, make better use of resources, support clinicians, and strengthen the patient experience.

Strengthening ED-to-inpatient transitions

ED-to-inpatient transitions were creating rework, extended diagnostic evaluations, potential external transfers, and prolonged ED length of stay (LOS).

Sound medical leaders hosted open forums with Mount Nittany Health clinicians to better understand barriers, safety concerns, and day-to-day workflow challenges. Working with Daniel McKinley, MD, MBA, Mount Nittany Health and Sound introduced Service Line Agreements and Rapid Admission Protocols, resulting in clearer roles and more consistent, patient-first admissions.

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Sound didn't just look at schedules and workflows. They took the time to get a full understanding of our people and how our entire system operates day to day. That continues to help us stay centered on one goal: putting patients first.

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— **Daniel McKinley, MD, MBA**
Medical Director, Quality and Safety

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We evaluated multiple hospital partners and chose Sound because their approach was truly collaborative and results driven. The provider voice was more prevalent with Sound, which set them apart. They deployed a clinician consultant on-site to work directly with our team, making the partnership feel intentional, hands on, and closely aligned with our clinical leadership.

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— **Tiffany Cabibbo, DSc, MSN, RN, CENP, FACHE**
Chief Nursing Officer



[†]Patient experience: FY25 Q2 to 76.6 in FY26 Q2; all other data: FY 25 vs. FY 26; Aug. 5, 2025–March 2, 2026.