# SOME SOLUTIONS

Need to take steps now to ensure that your hospital beds are available only to patients who absolutely need them.

1. Streamlining and expediting discharge of hospitalized patients can also free up precious bed space
2. increasing or expanding medical clinic hours so patients with chronic or acute medical conditions can receive care before their condition escalates
3. any patient who can be safely handled at home or in a less-acute setting should be considered for discharge
4. Most have also converted operating rooms into intensive care units.
5. Many others have worked with local post-acute care facilities to accelerate discharge of lower acuty patients to preserve inpatient capacity.
6. many hospitals are converting rehab, psych and other specialty beds into acute patient rooms and some acute patient rooms in negative pressure rooms.
7. utilizing the “flat spaces” (lobbies, waiting rooms, and hallways) can increase operating bed capacity by 10 percent
8. Simply moving patients who are awaiting discharge to a designated discharge holding area can free up crucial bed space.
9. Add an extra bed to all private rooms that are licensed as semi-private rooms
10. Psychiatric beds may be available for use if you can safely care for psychiatric patients elsewhere.
11. Look for potential useful spaces within your community, including vacant buildings, hotels, college dormitories, and convention centers. In many cases, such spaces will be most useful as isolation centers for people who test positive for the new coronavirus, but do not require hospitalization; such facilities can prevent the spread of infection in the community and ultimately drive down demand for hospital beds.
12. Alternative care settings may also be used to provide continued care to patients who require continuous monitoring but no longer need specialized equipment or services.

OTHER PROBLEMS

WAIT TIME

This is the wait between turning up at the hospital (technically being registered) and then actually being seen by a doctor. The time to be seen by the triage nurse is not counted as it is not part of definitive treatment but only to decide the urgency of the patient. It must be understood that it is extremely rare that patients triaged as urgent or emergency wait anything other than a couple of minutes. As such patients with immediately life threateningly problems do not end up waiting. Other non emergency patients do, however, often end up waiting. The maximum wait is meant to be four hours but at times this is breached.

Most patients stay in hospital longer than they need to.

What most patients in hospital are waiting for are investigations, procedures, operations or other specific specialist things being done for them.

All cases are different but if patients such as that are able to have their procedure sooner either in the Royal or in Antrim or indeed anywhere else they can usually be discharged after a much shorter period of time. This would free up a bed and mean that it could be used by another patient who would then not be a trolley wait.

As well as at the level of complex specialist care there are apparently basic services which can free up beds. Having social services etc. available outside 9 to 5 Monday to Friday would allow patients to be discharged at the weekend rather than taking up a bed until Monday.

 A more comprehensive service for providing the likes of intravenous antibiotics and fluids in the community would allow some elderly patients to be adequately treated in their own homes or their nursing homes. Both the patients and their families would much prefer this rather than being admitted to hospital where they are actually at greater risk of more serious hospital acquired infections.

Resources

1. <https://www.gehealthcare.com/insights/article/how-to-increase-hospital-bed-capacity-by-20-30-percent>
2. https://sluggerotoole.com/2012/01/20/the-solution-to-hospital-bed-crises-not-necessarily-more-beds/
3. <https://mscw.ac.in/NAAC/Criteria1/Samples-of-ProjectWork_Fieldwork/Computer_Science/software_Engineering/Software%20Engineering/Hospital%20Managment%20Project%20SE-converted.pdf>
4. [https://www.reliasmedia.com/articles/149295-discharge-waiting-room-gives-patients-a-comfortable-place-between-bed-and-hom](https://www.reliasmedia.com/articles/149295-discharge-waiting-room-gives-patients-a-comfortable-place-between-bed-and-home)e