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Employee Ideas Helping in Ashland Turnaround

Asante Ashland Community Hospital's turnaround continues, thanks in part to its own employees.

CEO Sheila Clough and her leadership team asked employees several months ago to share ideas on how to save costs without compromising patient care. The leaders got 144 responses, some of which have resulted in thousands of dollars in savings:



- In the medical surgery department, for example, nurses were concerned that large towels were being used when a small towel could suffice. The difference might seem insignificant, except that linen charges are based on weight rather than volume. So the nurses began using small towels when appropriate – resulting in a \$3,600 savings.

- A school nurse program run by a hospital is rare and can be costly. Although Asante Ashland's program is funded in part by schools and charitable contributions, the hospital still had to subsidize the program by \$100,000 a year. Rather than pull the plug on a popular service that served a community need, Sheila and the school nurses were able to renegotiate the hospital's contract with the school district. The savings? \$75,000 per year.

- The imaging department did some research and discovered that patient volumes didn't justify having a full-time echo tech. The hospital still needed the services of a skilled tech during regular business hours, however, so the team came up with a solution: The department would employ a part-time echo tech

to work on call. Not only did this approach work for the employee, who wanted to work part-time, but it saves the hospital \$35,000 per year.

"Clearly our employees' creative and innovative ideas are contributing to our financial stability," Sheila said. "The employees get the credit for turning this around."

Asante Ashland Community Hospital was losing millions of dollars per year before it was acquired by Asante in 2013, the same year that Sheila was named chief executive.

At an Employee Town Hall Forum last week, she reported that for the third straight quarter, the hospital not only broke even, it reported a gain of \$878,000. You can read a news article about the hospital's progress [here](#).