A simple method like the one below for use in smoothing elective surgery helps analyze and optimize surgical patient flow. It also helps prepare forecasts.

To track the flow of elective surgery, put a dot at the intersection of number of beds available and number of elective surgery admissions at the time of the morning bed huddle. Label dots by date and day of week. A dot above the line represents more patients than beds available; a dot below the line means there are excess beds. Connect the dots to see actual demand versus capacity over time, with data on the overall pattern and on relative activity for each day of the week. Constructing such a graph can help place patients in the short term, in real time, and provides a better grasp of how demand and capacity relate in the long term.