

Call Center Implementation Leads to Improved Patient Care and Patient Satisfaction

Brian Hayes, Allison Pinkham, Samantha Pollard, Marjorie Merritt RN, Sarah Smith RN, Shannon Dixon LPN, Lorna Ford BS CMA-AAMA

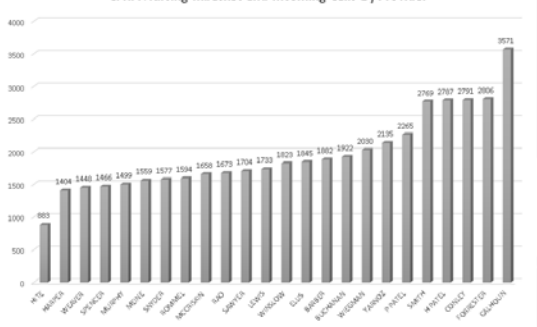
Background

- Multiple points of entry of patient calls.
- Heavy reliance on voicemail.
- Licensed staff doing administrative tasks.
- Long waits for return calls and resolution.

Methods

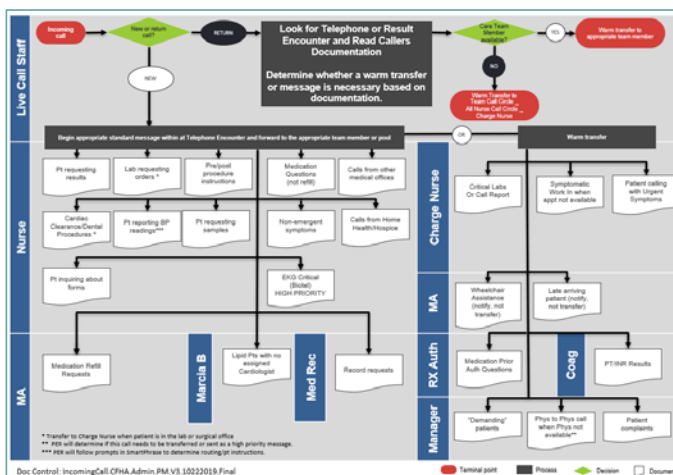
- Process began with measuring incoming call and in-basket volume and categorizing the types of calls, as well as tracking entry point (scheduling, nurse line, billing, etc.)
- Established that 80% of incoming calls going directly to a nurse resulted in leaving a voicemail.
- Individual nurse workload depends on provider panel size and practice style causing a great variance in work from one Physician-Nurse team to the next.

CFHA Nursing Inbasket and Incoming Calls By Provider



Methods

- A multidisciplinary team used the call and in-basket data to determine what job category was best suited for each call type.
- Established incoming call algorithm.
- Established “minimum information necessary” templates to collect important incoming call information.
- Restructured scheduling department, trained-up Schedulers to receive all incoming calls and distribute incoming calls to the correct work area using templates in EHR.
- Implemented clinical teams based on in-basket/call volumes.



- Extensive staff training and communication prior to Go Live.
- Eliminated all clinical voicemails, except for specialty clinics.
- Launched Call Center on 4/15/2019.

Results

Topic	Pre-Live	Post-Live	Difference	Change
Average Call Volume Per Day	903	780	↓ 123	14%
Nurses Total Weekly Talk Time (in hours)	140	91	↓ 49	35%
Patient Experience Scores	87 th %	93 rd %	↑ +6	

- From 80% of patients leaving a voicemail for clinical staff to 82% of patients getting needs met at first contact by non-clinical staff.
- Clinical teams created equity in workloads.
- Reduced staffing by 3 Clinical FTEs (repurposed to Call Center by attrition or available job posting)
- Reduced wait times and delays from first contact to resolution from 1 business day to < 4 hours.

Conclusions

- Call Centers enable effective communication and put the right work to the right person at the right time with each patient telephone contact.
- Improves patient satisfaction.

References

Jerzak, MD, J. and Sinsky, MD, FACP, C. (2019). *EHR In-Basket Restructuring for Improved Efficiency*. [online] Edhub.ama-assn.org. Available at: <https://edhub.ama-assn.org/steps-forward/module/2702694> [Accessed 7 Nov. 2019].

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