Improving Patient Flow

Where are the bottlenecks?
- "congestions"?
  - What impedes smooth flow?
  - Broad deep river vs. turbulent shallow rapids.
  - Where are people waiting?

Operations Management

Interlogy Time Stamps

- Time intervals are useful
  - Total wait time: how long patient is in office
    - Segments include: Receiving, pre-exam, exam, post-exam
  - Variation over course of day, every month
  - Assess effects of quality improvement efforts
  - Time stamp measurement
OCT Time by Month-YAR

Chart Title

Main Process Flow Diagram

Bottlenecks can move!
Operational Adjustments: Support Staff

- Personnel
  - Moved 2 strong techs to schedule
- Adjust schedule and template with AA
  - Start time moved to 7:15 AM
  - Lunch time blocked 11:30-12:15
  - Schedule template adjusted
  - Eliminate refractions

MGM Operational Adjustments: Schedule

- Adjust schedule and template with AA
  - Start time moved to 7:15 AM
  - Lunch time blocked 11:30-12:15
  - Schedule template adjusted
  - Eliminate refractions
Accuracy is Key

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Month</th>
<th>Avg face-to-face time (min)</th>
<th>Tech with Tech for Accuracy</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>June</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>3.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aug</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>3.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sept</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>3.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oct</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nov</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dec</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jan</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feb</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Avg. Face-to-face Time

Being Fast is not always the best

Operations Management: The Low Hanging Fruit

- Find Dumb Constraints
  - Old printer slowed the entire retinal service
  - Incomplete workups
  - Keep supplies close by
- Find Policy Constraints
  - Office hours increased by 1 hr 3 days a week
  - Lunch breaks
  - Coordinate office and testing schedules
Improving Patient Flow:
Number of patients seen per day

Effect of schedule change
number of patients seen/d

- Increased # pts seen/day by 4.1

Operations Management Summary

- Increased productivity is nearly pure profit
- Fixed expenses remain the same
- One additional patient per day at $50/patient is sufficient per year

Improving patient satisfaction with wait times
Operational Improvements

- Less congestion and frenzy
- More patient satisfaction
- More revenue
- Better patient care
- You can do it, too!

What Makes Flow Turbulent Despite a Well Run System?

- Unusually complicated or difficult patients
- Staff absence/sickness
- Schedule problems
  - Add-ons
  - Early arrivals

How to Measure Flow in Your Office

- Make a diagram of the process in your office: e.g., check-in > tech > OP > glasses > check-out.
- Give each patient a time stamp sheet to measure start and end time at each step.
- Give a clipboard, pen, and timesheet.
- Even one day's worth of data is useful.
- Pick a busy day if possible.
How to Measure Flow in Your Office

- Determine where the process is inefficient
  - Don't be afraid to make changes - try things!
  - Feel the freedom of change!
  - Patient satisfaction is helped by smiles, warm attitude, information

Conclusion

- Interesting and useful data
- The best improvements are free!
- Refining your practice
  - More serenity
  - Better patient satisfaction
  - Better financial performance
Patient Cycle Tool

One key measure of office efficiency is the patient cycle time. This is defined as the time a patient enters the practice until they leave. The Patient Cycle Tool can be administered in several ways: a) Patients can carry the clipboard through their visit and note the times, b) Staff can write the times as the patient travels through the practice, c) Patients can be "shadowed" by a person to document the times. There is space to write in comments along the way.

<p>| | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Patient is given clipboard with form and watch (or a staff member can shadow patient)</td>
<td>Scheduled appointment time:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Staff enter start time and instruct the patient fill in the times until they check out.</td>
<td>Provider you are seeing today:</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Instructions: Please fill in the time at each point during your visit

<p>| | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Time you checked in (e.g. 1:53 pm)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Time you sat in the waiting room (e.g. 2:03 pm)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Time staff came to get you (e.g. 2:12 pm)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Time staff member left you (e.g. 2:17 pm)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Time provider came in room (e.g. 2:32 pm)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Time provider left the room (e.g. 2:47 pm)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Time you left the exam room (e.g. 2:50 pm)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Time you arrived at check out (e.g. 2:51 pm)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Time you left practice (e.g. 2:55 pm)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

COMMENTS: