Radiology Critical Test Results Management: A Successful Approach for Implementation

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Purpose

To address system barriers to timely reporting and documentation of critical test results.

To create a completely closed loop system beginning with the priority of the exam order and ending with critical test results (CTR) reaching the ordering clinician.

To automate the auditing process for tracking and trending of turnaround times for critical test result reporting.

Background

Three major issues were identified by the CTR project team:

1. The radiology exam order prioritization process was convoluted for the ordering clinician. Over fifty urgency choices were in place.

2. The sheer number of urgency designations made it difficult for the radiologist to prioritize interpretations.

3. There was not a reliable, user-friendly process for the radiologist to contact the ordering clinician or document the communication of the CTR.

New exam order and final result prioritization system developed.

- Urgency of exam performance and report turnaround expectation determined by ordering clinician at time of order.
- Life Threatening, Urgent but not Life Threatening, Routine, Discharge Priority, Morning Portable

Four results categories available in the CTR system for radiologist communication of CTR’s and unexpected findings.

- Life Threatening, Significant, Potentially Concerning, ED Recall

Notification pathways created.

- Ordering clinician profiles validated and education materials distributed. Ongoing follow up and education. Compliance monitoring.

Daily auditing process established for reporting and documentation of Life Threatening CTR’s.

- Timeliness of Radiologist report of CTR.
- Timeliness of OC retrieval of CTR.

Veriphy Method Flowchart

Goal:

Communicate Life Threatening Critical Results or Panic Values results within 60 minutes.

- Order entry designation dictates urgency of notification response.
- Ordering clinician actively engaged in urgency of exam completion and result turnaround.
- Within the first month of implementation, compliance with 60 minute turn-around time for life threatening tests from went from 35% to 99%
- Use of virtual pagers for medical teams to address issue of residents continues to grow in demand adding to success of Veriphy system.
- Continued success in ED Recall at 100%

Conclusions

Implementing five exam priority choices in conjunction with the CTR system (Veriphy) created a completely closed loop system that:

- vastly improved efficiency of communicating CTR’s to ordering clinicians.
- automated documentation process for communications.
- reduced turn-around time for reporting results.
- improved ability to track and trend success.