Increasing On-Time Screening Mammogram Patient Appointments and Improving Load-leveled Work

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Background: The Breast Imaging and Intervention Department (BII) implemented daily planning patient appointment times, resuming patient and staff dissatisfaction. Unleaded load balancing among the technologists was a secondary barrier to staff utilization.

Method: In 2016, baseline data was collected for 28,200 screening mammogram patients through a daily tracking system using a visual pacing board. 1. Technologists were given a green or red magnet on the board next to the patients scheduled appointment times.
2. A green magnet signifies an on time appointment and a red magnet signifies a patient who was seen >15 minutes late.
3. Survivorship data was collected for 29,290 screening mammogram patients through a daily tracking system.

Results

- For 2016, 58% of the patients had an on time screening mammogram appointment.
- The key issues identified that prevented the patients from being seen on time were:
  - Patients arriving late for appointments
  - Working outside our cycle time
  - Change is hard

Lessons Learned

- The BII team will continue to measure on-time appointments daily using the pacing board as the measurement tool.
- Prior day's on-time percentages are visually posted and a mammogram room unavailable, unplanned absences, and PTO.

Control

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Conclusion

- This project has reduced the average screening patient lead time from 34.6 minutes to 22.2 minutes.
- The team successfully met and exceeded their goal of 75% on-time patient appointments during the first quarter of 2017.
- In the second quarter of 2017 the on-time patient appointment time dropped to 58%. This was attributed to full patient schedules and new technologist training.
- Future improvements will need to address common barriers that cause deviations from plan, i.e. procedures that make a mammogram room unavailable, unplanned absences, and PTO.
- BII is working on a current process improvement project to define and solve staffing gaps.

DMAIC

- Define
- Measure
- Analyze
- Improve
- Control

Methods

- Plan, Do, Study, Act (PDSA) tests were conducted which lead to several implemented improvements:
  - The Breast Imaging and Intervention Department (BII) experienced delays meeting patient appointment times causing patient and staff dissatisfaction. Uneven load leveling among the technologist was a secondary barrier to staff utilization.
  - Technologists were given a green or red magnet on the board next to the patients scheduled appointment times.
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