

Standardizing Chemotherapy Use Processes

The Problem

Chemotherapy agents are considered high-risk. Near-misses with chemotherapy agents prompt an immediate response.

- Both the American Society of Health-System Pharmacists (ASHP) and the American Society of Clinical Oncology (ASCO) have released best practice guidelines for the prescribing, dispensing, administration, and monitoring of chemotherapeutic agents
- Variability in chemotherapy processes lead to medication errors

Aim/Goal

- To understand various practitioners' expectations for chemotherapy checking and turnaround time
- To establish a standardized process for the clinical and operational checks of chemotherapeutic agents
- To establish a training program for staff on chemotherapeutic agents
- To reduce chemotherapy-related medication events

The Team

May Adra, PharmD; Denise Arena, RPh; Cheryl Avedissian, RPh; Andrea Bullock, MD; Holly Creveling, RPh; Holly Dowling, RN; Margaret Galligan, RN; Christine Garabedian, RN; Rena Lithotomos, RPh; David Mangan, PharmD; Rebecca Miksad, MD; Frank Mitrano, RPh; Zaven Norigian, PharmD; Toni Riggan, RN; Sarah Slater, MD; Margaret Stephan, RPh; Erin Tardanico, RN; Annie Whatmough, RN

The Interventions

- Observations of the chemotherapy order processing and checking processes were done
- Discussions with nurses and physicians were held to determine expectations
- Value stream mapping was done
- A new process for clinical and operational checking of chemotherapy was developed and implemented
- Checklists were incorporated into the new process
- A training program was initiated
- The new process was implemented in December 2011

The Results/Progress to Date

Past Process



Current Process



Lessons Learned

- Continuous and incremental improvements are necessary to achieve desired outcomes
- Staff feedback was essential to the success of the proposed changes

Next Steps/What Should Happen Next

- Expand the scope to include chemotherapy agents in the outpatient settings
- Implement the new process for chemotherapy agents used in research protocols



Beth Israel Deaconess
Medical Center



A teaching hospital of
Harvard Medical School

THE SILVERMAN INSTITUTE
For Health Care Quality and Safety

For More Information Contact
May Adra, Medication Safety Coordinator,
madra@bidmc.harvard.edu