

Streamlining Critical Test Value Communication

The Problem

Through the Fall 2010 Joint Commission Accreditation visit and through review of the Laboratory Patient Safety Goals of the College of American Pathologists, BIDMC was presented with the opportunity to improve our process for streamlining and monitoring the communication of critical lab values within the inpatient setting.

Aim/Goal

Reduce the volume of calls (communicating critical lab values) to the medical-surgical unit nursing stations so that a minimum of 90% of these calls can be streamlined directly to a provider who can act upon the results.

The Team

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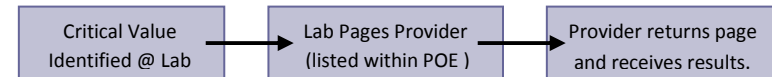
The Interventions

Implemented a new process enabling streamlining of critical lab values by communicating directly from the labs to the provider who can act upon the results. This process was supported by the following:

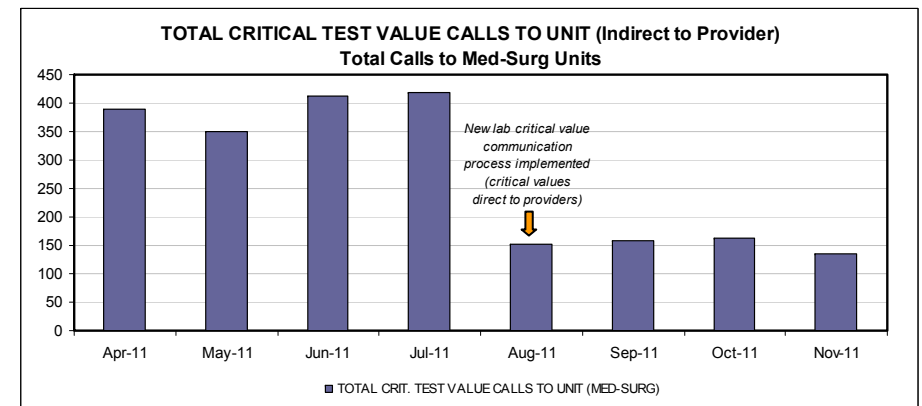
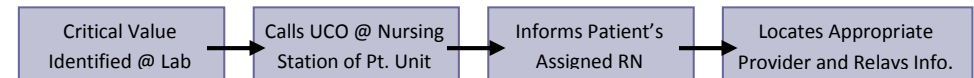
- Cataloguing the standard provider-hand-off process for each service
- Through IS programming, creation of a '24/7 Critical Test Result Contact' field within the POE Patient Profile which is required and auto-populated by each service-line's standard handoff process (primarily rollover pager, pager sign-off, or on-call pager), providing necessary paging information.
- Enabling POE access for Lab Techs to view contact information captured within the 24/7 Critical Test Result Contact Field.
- Providing education to all impacted staff and ensured all lab SOPs were updated
- Ensuring a back-up process (previous process) would remain in the event a provider could not be reached in a timely manner. (Calls would re-direct to the nursing station to be channeled appropriately to the provider who could act upon these results.)
- Establishing a public mailbox to provide the opportunity to call out any issues or concerns associated with the new process during the transition period.

The Results/Progress to Date

New Process (less steps, less chance for error, greater efficiency):



Previous Process (Existing Back-up Process):



Lessons Learned

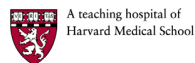
- Sometimes although the finish line is clear, the road map to getting there may have unforeseen bumps and obstacles along the way.
- There are times when adding a step within a workflow can not only eliminate other steps elsewhere within the overall process, but promote patient safety.
- Don't worry about 'over-communicating' a change. Reinforcement is an aid to a new initiative's success.

Next Steps/What Should Happen Next

- Continue to monitor the process and timeliness of communicating critical values.
- Investigate opportunities for potential spread in the future to other patient care areas within BIDMC.



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