

Re-designing the Division of General Surgery's General Appointment Line

The Problem

The General Surgery Line (GSL), a resource intended to streamline the appointment scheduling process for referring provider and non-directed referral patients, was not meeting the intended need. Schedulers could not schedule appointment without physician office approval, causing delays and frustration. Many of the patients scheduled often missed appointments or arrived at the wrong time. Surgeons questioned the appropriateness of the referrals and referring provider offices were often frustrated with the length of time it took to obtain an appointment.

Aim/Goal

To improve access and communication within the Division of General Surgery, thereby, improving customer service.

The Team

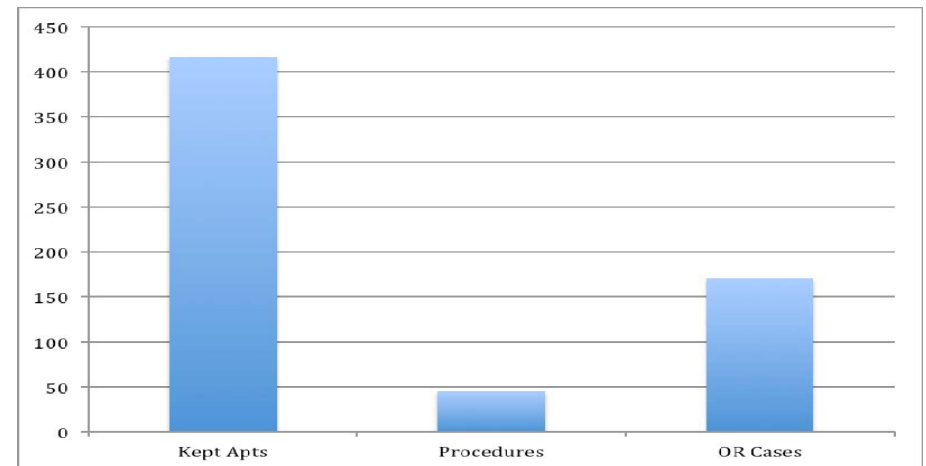
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The Interventions

- Creation of *The GSL Guidelines and Protocol*, which outlined expectations and provided guidance on dealing with different situations and clinical resources.
- Cross training administrative staff and establishing a coverage plan for unexpected and expected staffing shortages.
- Creation of appointment intake sheet for internal communication.
- CCC template review and standardization.
- Reserving slots for open booking.
- Surgeon support and engagement.
- Creation of GSL specific reports to track DNK, patient distribution, booking diagnosis, and surgical and procedural intervention, allowing us to track resource volume and effectiveness.

The Results/Progress to Date

The creation of the GSL and Doc-to-Doc appointment types allowed us to track and report results. In FY13 a total of 417 new patients entered the Division via GSL (kept appointments). Of those patient, 45 outpatient procedures were performed (11%), and 151 OR cases completed (41%).



Lessons Learned

- General Surgery clinics are held on the East and West campus along with Chelsea, Lexington, Milton and Needham; given our scope, physician support and engagement was very important to our success.
- Training and physician engagement are on going. Administrative and Faculty meetings, along with combined bi-annual meetings are forums by which we communicate and re-enforce our commitment to access and service excellence.

Next Steps/What Should Happen Next:

- Work towards open-access booking across more sites.

