

PROCESS IMPROVEMENT REPORT #23

North Clinic Improvement Case Report: Application of Advanced Access Changes to Improve Mammography Waiting Time and Rates

The ICSI Improvement Case Reports are designed to document success achieved within participating medical groups in the improvement of a process of care, clinical outcome, satisfaction of care or waste reduction.

Prepared in cooperation with
staff from the North Clinic

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Medical Group Description

North Clinic is a primary care-based clinic with delivery sites in four northwest suburbs of Minneapolis, Minnesota. It is comprised of providers in the areas of family practice, internal medicine, obstetrics/gynecology, gastroenterology and dermatology.

Background

North Clinic participated in ICSI's first Advanced Access Action Group from October 1999 through May 2000. Advanced Access was piloted in one clinic site among six family practice physicians. Due to the success of the pilot in decreasing waiting time for appointment, implementation of changes to achieve access was spread to family practice across all four clinic sites.

North Clinic's success with Advanced Open Access motivated them to look at other areas throughout the clinic. Mammography was identified as an area where the concept of Advanced Open Access could have an impact. An action group for mammography was established to work on this improvement project.

Aim(s)

1. Decrease the waiting time to schedule a mammography from 8-10 weeks to within 2 weeks.
2. Increase rate of mammography up-to-date from a baseline of 72% to 85%.

Collection and Analysis of Data

- Data charts attached.
- Baseline data on waiting time for a mammography appointment were collected in June, 2000 with data collected on a weekly basis through July, 2001.
- Baseline data on mammography rates up-to-date were collected in January 2000 by chart audit as part of preventive services up-to-date. An average sample size of approximately 200 charts were reviewed monthly across all clinic sites. Subsequent chart audits were conducted across all clinics sites throughout 2000.

Implementation Actions

The high leverage changes implemented to improve overall Access to appointments were applied to mammography and included:

1. Gaining Capacity - to meet the demand for mammography appointments additional appointment slots were added to the schedule. This was accomplished by adjusting the start and end time of the day by adding early and late appointments. Additional appointment slots were added over lunch by staggering staff lunch times to ensure that the department was staffed to see patients over lunch.
2. Optimizing Staff - overall staffing levels were increased to provide more "supply" and staff roles were changed to ensure that staff were working at their highest level. Initial staffing for mammography was two technicians Monday through Thursday and one technician on Friday when the second technician covered radiology. To eliminate the need for a technician to cover in radiology on Friday, a medical assistant was trained to meet this need providing two technicians in mammography.

Improvement/Results

North Clinic demonstrated an increased rate of mammography up-to-date across clinic sites.

- The average number of days until the next available mammography appointment decreased from 40 days to 18 days in the period of June 2000 through July 2001.
- The rate of mammography up-to-date increased from a baseline of 72% in 1997 to 83% in June 2001.

Measure	baseline	follow-up
Time to 3rd next Mammography appointment	40 days	18 days
Mammography up-to-date	72%	83%

Lessons Learned

- The principles and changes of Advanced Access were able to be applied beyond routine appointment scheduling to decrease the waiting time for scheduling a mammography.
- Reducing scheduling barriers for mammography appointments resulted in an increase in overall mammography up-to-date rates.

Next Steps

- North Clinic will continue efforts to improve overall preventative services up-to-date, focusing on mammography screening for eligible patients.
- Efforts will be targeted on identifying and eliminating barriers to patients obtaining appointments for mammography to improve overall up-to-date rates.

North Clinic

Rate of Mammography up-to-date

