The Broken Record

When the e-DH Cadence system was implemented in October 2015, patient encounters were being routed on a daily basis to the DH Missing Coverage workqueue. Referrals end up here when they are missing critical information such as patient insurance, guarantor information, or patient emergency contacts. This creates another hand that must touch the referral in order for proper billing to occur. The goal of a Greenbelt-led project was to use the DMAIC framework to reduce the number of encounters in the Missing Coverage workqueue.

At the start of the project the DH Missing Coverage workqueue had 2,600 active encounters, where 18% were the result of internal referrals and 82% were the result of incoming referrals from outside institutions. The team's goal was to reduce the volume in DH Missing Coverage workqueue by 80%, as well as to reduce the number of encounters being added to the Workqueue and to increase the efficiency of updating patient records. A reduction in the number of encounters would reduce defects in the Patient Registration screen, decrease extra-processing time by the staff, and reduce the volume of workqueues going forward.

The team narrowed the focus of their project and pinpointed a few root causes of the issue. One of the main issues was that there was no standard process between the north and south referral teams, so the project team decided to implement a standardized process for all staff working on patient registrations. In addition, they noted that outside providers often didn't include all pertinent information with their referral requests, so they created a standardized incoming referral document for those outside providers to use.

The team replaced the Document Management system with the OnBase referral fax system to align north and south processes. Additionally, a Master Referral form was created and uploaded to the DH website. Due to these process changes, the DH Missing Coverage workqueue has decreased to about 550 entries daily. The team found that the biggest help in keeping the workqueue level down is constant communication among departments.

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