Outpatient Rehabilitation Services – Appointment Scheduling Process

The Problem

Customer service for telephone scheduling was inconsistent because front desk s staff, in addition to handling over 1400 incoming calls per month, also check-in/check-out for PT/OT and newly established spine center clinic. Timely appointment scheduling and accessibility with live coverage was an issue for our ambulatory practice. This also negatively impacted our patient satisfaction scores in the areas of scheduling timely appointments and reaching a live person and thus confirmed the need for improvement. This project addresses effectiveness/efficiency and timeliness of patient care services.

Aim/Goal

- To provide top high quality of service to patients in a timely fashion when calling to schedule new and follow up appointments as well as reducing scheduling errors by having a dedicated resource person.
- To reduce number of wait times/delays/abandon calls based on total number of calls per month.

The Team

- Amalia Gonzalez, Operations Practice Manager
- Christine Healey, HCA Operations Manager
- Nicholle Lewis, Practice Manager HCA Call Center
- Louise Mackisack, Director, Ambulatory Administration
- Kelly Orlando, Administrative Director, Ambulatory Administration
- Kathleen Shillue, Clinical Manager, Outpatient Rehabilitation Services
- Chad Smith, Patient Service Representative HCA Call Center
- Eliane Teixiera-Fernandes, Practice Administrator Outpatient Rehabilitation Services

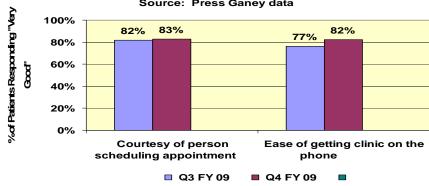
The Interventions

- Held meetings with Rehab. Svcs and HCA leadership to review telephone statistical data and the impact the calls were having on patient satisfaction, both on the telephone and those in the waiting room.
- Discussed obstacles to providing high quality patient telephone triage service when contacting outpatient rehab dept and reviewed operational challenges for the front desk staff.
- ldentified space on Dana 9 and necessary equipment to support position.
- Transferred 1.0 FTE practice representative to HCA call center to meet the demand of the scheduling process.

Hired resource and provided new hire in-service training by clinical services manager.

The Results/Progress to Date





- Identified inefficiencies with incoming faxes and thus saw a cost savings in fax paper as patient information is in OMR.
- Improved number of calls answered and reduced scheduling errors significantly.

Lessons Learned

Centralized scheduling of appointments by a specialized HCA call center resource, in addition to collaborating with key leadership allows for patients positive experience when scheduling appointment as well as having less wait times for patients checking in and/or out of the clinic. Patients seem much happier due to no interruptions in check-in/check-out process.

Next Steps/What Should Happen Next

- Monitor Patient Satisfaction data to sustain the scores.
- Continue to work with the team to ensure telephone stats and data continues to trends in the right direction.
- Address challenges that may impede success of the improvement goals established.





