Reducing Scheduling Time for I-123 Total Body Scans

The Problem

The Endocrine Clinic communicated significant inefficiencies with booking I-123 total body scans (TBS) in Nuclear Medicine.

Total body scans and thyroid scans are studies performed in Nuclear Medicine to evaluate patients with thyroid disease. Years ago, thyroid scans were done with i-123. TBS were done with I-131.These studies used different instrumentation and were booked on two separate schedules.

More recently, the use of I-131 has decreased and both thyroid scans and TBS are done with I-123. These scans now compete for the same resources in Nuclear Medicine and can not be booked for the same time slot. Also, the number of TBS has increased without any increase in slot availability in the schedule. This caused numerous inefficiencies including:

- Toggling between two separate schedules to look for open slots on both schedules and blocking slots on one of the schedules
- Time consuming phone calls to Technologists for help with scheduling when there were no available time slots

Aim/Goal

Our goal was to reduce the time it takes the Endocrine Clinic to book total body scans to <5 minutes.

The Team

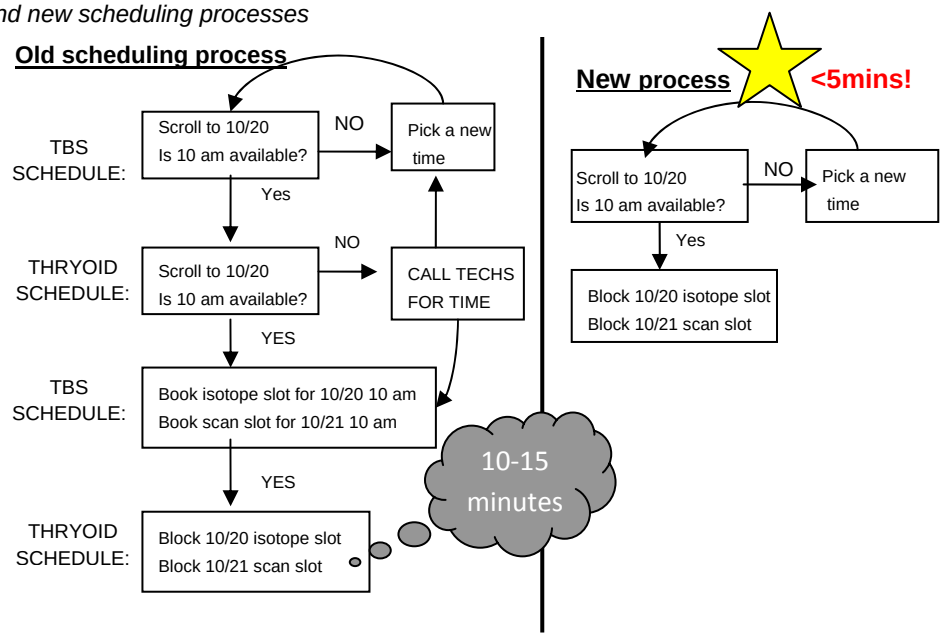
- Dace Jansons, Radiology, Manager Nuclear Medicine
- Mary Ritchie, Radiology Associated
- Peggy Stokes, Senior Nuclear Medicine Technologist
- Larry Barbaras, Senior Programmer Analyst

The Interventions

- Create a process flow diagram to understand the steps required by the Endocrine Clinic to book a total body scan at current state
- Assess areas of opportunities to achieve our goal, which included:
  - Booking total body scans and thyroid scans in one schedule to eliminate toggling between two separate schedules
  - Increasing the number of total body scan slots on the schedule to reduce phone calls from the Front Desk to Nuclear Medicine Technologists
- Educate and train staff in the Endocrine Clinic and Nuclear Medicine on the changes

The Results/Progress to Date

Below is an example of scheduling a TBS appointment on 10/20 at 10:00 AM in the old and new scheduling processes



Lessons Learned

- When doing repetitive tasks, it is often difficult to recognize the inefficiencies that are intertwined within the processes

Next Steps/What Should Happen Next

- Begin scheduling during off-hours via e-mail with the Endocrine Clinic to avoid phone calls and improve efficiency even further

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For More Information Contact

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