Tracking Patients Needing Outreach

The Problem

Providers find it difficult to track patients who have cancelled their appointments or have not scheduled an appointment when expected. Such patients include patients at risk for suicide, clinical relapse, and hospitalization. Therefore, tracking such patients offers an opportunity to improve outcomes.

Aim

➢ Develop a more efficient and effective process for identifying patients who have not been seen in the last six months or have cancelled their most recent visit.

➢ Provide that information to clinicians so that they can decide upon appropriate interventions.

The Team

➢ Stephenie Loux, QI Data Analyst, Department of Psychiatry

➢ Pam Peck, Clinical Director, Department of Psychiatry

➢ Gjergj Lazri, Ambulatory Care Practice Manager, Dept of Psychiatry

The Interventions

➢ Identify the most recently scheduled psychiatry appointment for each patient seen in HMFP psychiatry clinic since October 1,2008, using hospital scheduling data

➢ Create a list of patients who have not been seen by a psychiatry provider in the last 6 months and have providers classify them as active, terminated, or one time consults

➢ Create a list of patients who cancelled or did not keep his or her most recent appointment and did not reschedule within two weeks. Providers review this list and
- Identify patients who have terminated their care
- If clinically appropriate, contact patients by letter or telephone for outreach
- Document any attempts to contact patients in his or her medical record; and

➢ Provider lists are tracked and updated monthly.

Progress to Date
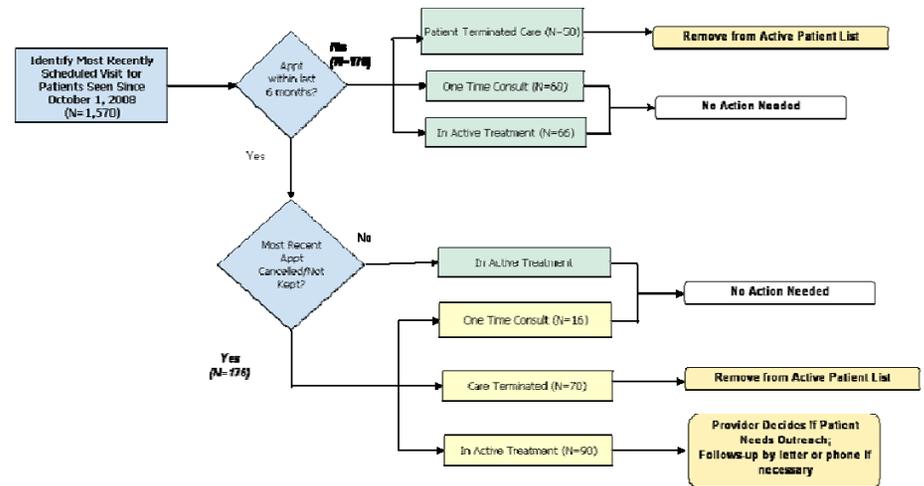
After the first iteration of this process, providers were able to remove 120 patients from their active patient lists. They also identified 67 patients who needed outreach and followed up by letter or telephone.

Lessons Learned

➢ Provider input and feedback are essential for creating the most timely and streamlined process.

➢ Certain types of appointments, including consultations and urgent care visits, should be excluded from the "patients need outreach" list since providers typically see these patients only once.

Next Steps

Possible next steps include:

➢ Expanding the process to include patients seen by residents

➢ Developing a system in WebOMR which reminds providers if a patient has not been seen within a specified time period.

For More Information Contact
Stephenie Loux, M.S., QI Data Analyst,

sloux@bidmc.harvard.edu