Reducing Turnaround Time for Inpatients Referred to Nuclear Medicine

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Background – The Problem

- From Jul – Dec 2012, only 58% of all cardiac Nuclear Medicine inpatient exams were completed on the same day of the order.
- Further analysis showed that patients admitted for cardiac observation on Friday or Saturday would have to wait until Monday for clearance for discharge from the hospital.
- If patients were discharged with the option of returning within 72 hours as a out-patient could be risky if the patient fails to return.
Project Aim Statement

• Our aim with this study is to improve our service in Nuclear Medicine positively impacts hospital revenue and also my positively improve patient satisfaction.

• By reducing the cycle time in Nuclear Medicine, we aim to increase the capacity to complete more inpatient case per day.

• By reducing length of stay (LOS) for inpatients may also improve the patient experience.
Project Goals

• To look at impatient Nuclear Medicine Cardiac Scans for a specific time period.
• To measure the turnaround time it takes from the time an inpatient cardiac stress test is ordered to completion of final written report by the Nuclear Medicine Physician.
Solutions Implemented

- Speak with the two units with the highest rate of Stress Test Exam cancellations - 3 NEWS and 1 Tower
- Speak with Hospitalists to enter orders for exams by 10:30 AM
- Re-educate 3 NEWS staff and 1 Tower of how to reschedule outpatient Nuc Med Exam
Results

58% of all cardiac NucMed inpatient exams are completed on the same day of the order:

**Turnaround Time**
(Jul - Dec 2012; only cardiac NucMed inpatient exams)

*Removed Sundays from TAT calculations.*
Analysis of Results

• Exams ordered before 12:00 PM are much more likely to be completed on the same day.
• Before 12:00 PM 85% completed same day
• After 12:00 PM 98% completed next day / two days
Lessons Learned

• The need to educate additional units the may order cardiac stress test for early discharge or pre surgery clearance on patient prep pre testing.

• Having radiopharmaceuticals readiness for add-on cardiac stress test for same day testing.

• Educate units regarding out-patient vs. in-patient ordering before patient discharge.
Next Steps

• Handed out patient prep material to 3 NEWS and 1 Tower staff; posted material in Dept.
• Reach out to additional Units that have begun ordering Saturday Myocardial Stress Tests with patient prep materials
• Monitor turnaround times
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A review by Manager/AD/Medical Director/VP is recommended prior to submission.

Reviewed By:________________________
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