

DIGITAL FAXED ORDER MANAGEMENT A LEAN IN THE LAB INITIATIVE

DBS-based Performance Partnership

Asante Ashland Community hospital collaborated with Beckman Coulter’s performance partnership team to reduce lab-related patient registration wait time, reduce lead time for orders to be filed, and bring down the number of lost or duplicate orders. These issues were challenging in that the long patient wait time and misfiled lab orders were not only impacting the patient’s experience, but also providers for the hospital.

As the lab embarked on addressing these issues, they utilized the problem-solving process that began with identifying the cause of the problem to ensure that a sustainable countermeasure could be put in place. The key elements focused on where to eliminate manual order transports, the registration file cart as well as the fax order log spreadsheet. Furthermore, the process had to become a HIPPA-compliant system.

The plan they set in motion for implementation was that all fax-received lab orders would be scanned into a centralized digital location that would be accessible by both the laboratory and registration staff. This had the added benefit of making the scanned order images searchable by patient name and date of birth. It also allowed for the simplification of multiple orders for a single patient.



Overview

Asante Ashland Community Hospital is a 49-bed community hospital that features a birthing center, surgery center, diagnostic imaging, laboratory and respiratory testing services. Outpatient services include internal medicine, home health and hospice care, wound care, and hyperbaric medicine.

Identify Problem Root Causes

Utilize Lean tools to evaluate current process and determine what needs to change

Form a Team and Make a Plan

Begin brainstorming and trystorming ideas for process improvement

Implement the Plan

Define new processes, Write policies, Train employees, Set a “go-live” date, Go live

Measure Success and Sustain

Utilize Lean tools to evaluate improvement and determine if/where problems are still occurring

Identify Root Causes of New/Ongoing Problems

Utilize Lean tools to evaluate new process and search for additional opportunities for improvement

The solution was to utilize the already-existing Meditech clinical outpatient scheduling module to create a “scheduled clinical account” in Meditech for each patient with an order on file and scan orders for each patient into the appropriate corresponding scheduled accounts.

From an organizational process change perspective, the lab needed to install Meditech scanners and the phlebotomy and clerical staff was granted the necessary Meditech access. This provided an opportunity to create standard work that entails the detailed policies and procedures to be followed by the phlebotomy, registration and lab clerical staffs.

To ensure readiness, core competency check-lists were generated and followed by all affected staff members that would be involved in the new process.

Ultimately, the process of following LEAN-based standard work methodology to identify the root causes and implement the appropriate countermeasures set the lab up for success that would be sustainable. The ultimate impact to patient care was reflected in the vastly improved order wait time that went from 200 minutes down to 80 mins. Furthermore, patient wait time for registration improved and the proportion of patients experiencing increased wait times decreased.

