Physicians Drive Down Wait Times by 85%

Central Okanagan Division of Family Practice
Shared Care GI Initiative

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Central Okanagan Division of Family Practice organized a Shared Care collaborative to create system redesign and improve access to Gastroenterology care. Project work focused on referrals, the triage process, endoscopy booking, and communication between family physicians and specialists. Key stakeholders included: family physicians, Gastroenterologists, and health authority administration.

OBJECTIVES

Work commenced with the goal of providing timely access to GI care. Three key issues were addressed:

- GI referral process from family physician to GI specialist
- GI endoscopy wait times and accuracy of wait time information for endoscopy procedures
- Interprofessional relationships between family physicians and GI specialists

LOGISTICS

A rigorous wait list review was conducted to ensure all patients on the wait list were ready, willing and able to undergo an endoscopic procedure. A new procedure booking form was designed and implemented to plan procedures at the time of initial patient referral.

Gastroenterologists, family doctors and the Manager of Ambulatory Care co-developed a comprehensive referral form so that gastroenterologists can better assess priority levels.

The new GI Referral Form was piloted and revised based on feedback. Changes included communication back to the referring physician which provides triage urgency and estimated wait time.

While this project was underway, the British Columbia Cancer Agency (BCCA) launched their Colon Screening Program. Further work was done to identify referral pathways and prepare for increased demand.

OUTCOMES

As a result of our collaborative work the booking process for GI services has been streamlined. The backlog of referrals for Endoscopy at Kelowna General Hospital (KGH) has been reduced by approximately 75%, and the wait time (in weeks) has been reduced by approximately 85%.

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total number of patients waiting for KGH Endoscopy procedure</td>
<td>7044</td>
<td>1844</td>
<td>2444*</td>
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<td>Average wait times in weeks</td>
<td>117.9</td>
<td>17.2</td>
<td>14.8</td>
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*483 of the patients waiting as at February 6, 2014 had positive FIT tests. The increase in number of patients waiting may be due in part to the introduction of the BCCA Colon Screening Program

RESOURCES DEVELOPED

The project team designed the following tools:

- A comprehensive referral form which highlights key information
- A new booking form to more effectively schedule procedures
- An algorithm to help physicians choose the appropriate referral form

KEY WINS

- Collaborative development of a comprehensive referral form
- Development of a booking form which utilizes BC Surgical Patient Registry codes and wait time targets
- Improved consistency triaging referrals
- Improved communication between family physicians and GI care
- Substantial reduction in wait times for KGH Endoscopy procedures
- Ability to provide information regarding wait times by priority levels