

Improving Inter-Hospital Transfers Through Implementation of a Transfer Accept Note



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Background

- Inter-hospital transfer patients have longer average lengths of stay, higher costs per hospital stay, lower frequency of discharges home, and higher inpatient mortality.¹
- Inter-hospital transfer practices are difficult to standardize due to the variability in resources, staffing, and documentation between hospitals.
- Our problem: Multiple instances where a cardiology patient accepted for transfer during the day arrived at night without any information.

Aim

To standardize acceptance of inter-hospital transfers to the cardiology service at an academic medical center through implementation of a transfer accept note in the EMR.

Methods

1. A retrospective chart review was performed for all patients admitted to the cardiology service from July to August 2018.
2. The daytime transfer coordinator, cardiology NPs, cardiology teams, and night float residents were interviewed about current practices for accepting and admitting transfers.
3. A cardiology transfer accept note was created in the EMR in order to streamline the admission process.

Results

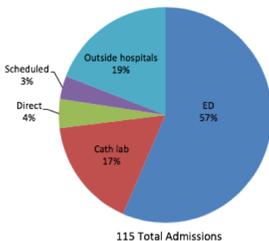


Figure 1. Cardiology admissions from July to August 2018.

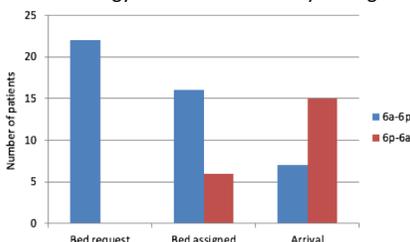


Figure 2. Timing of bed request, bed assignment, and patient arrival for 22 inter-hospital transfers.

VA Boston Daytime Cardiology Outside Hospital Transfers

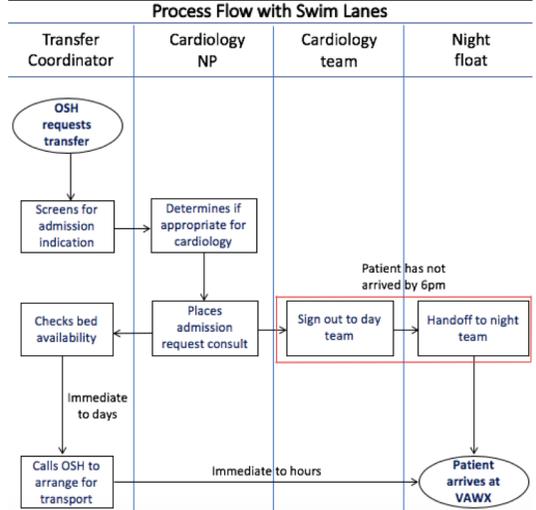


Figure 3. Process map for inter-hospital cardiology transfers with identified redundancy boxed in red.

Template: CARDIOLOGY TRANSFER ACCEPTANCE NOTE
 Active Duty Zemoue, 46 Y/O, FEMALE
 000-00-0000

Transferring Hospital:
 NON VA Transfer Facility: []

VA Transfer Facility:
 Bedford
 Haverduster
 Providence
 Central Western Massachusetts
 West Haven
 Topeka
 White River Junction

Referring Provider: []
 Contact Number: []
 Date admitted to hospital: Sep 20, 2018 []
 Accepting Provider: []
 Principal DX: []
 Brief Summary/Reason for referral: []
 PMS: []

Figure 4. Cardiology transfer accept note template in the EMR.

Discussion

- All 22 inter-hospital transfers were accepted during the day, however 15/22 arrived at night.
- Lack of documentation in the EMR and multiple verbal handoffs led to inadequate information for the nighttime admitting physician.
- A transfer accept note to be documented in the EMR by the cardiology NP (who accepts transfers and receives sign out) was implemented to streamline the process.
- Future directions: to evaluate utilization of the transfer accept note and expand to other specialties.

1 Sokol-Hessner L et al. Interhospital transfer patients discharged by academic hospitalists and general internists: Characteristics and outcomes. J Hosp Med. 2016 April; 11 (4): 245-50.