

# Improved Orthopedics Patient Visit Time and Access

## The Problem

The average lead time for a patient to be seen by a physician ranged from 4 to 6 weeks which resulted in high cancellation and no show rates, as well as uncaptured volume. The average patient visit time (including cast removal, x-ray, provider visit, and new cast) exceeded 3 hours, which created serious patient satisfaction issues. Appointment lengths and start time were the same for most providers causing contention for scarce resources. There were waves of patients checking in, checking out, and waiting to be x-rayed. In addition, providers were often waiting for patients, creating “unproductive” time for the providers.

## Aim/Goal

- Improve access for new and follow-up appointments to reduce lead time
- Decrease patient visit time (from check-in to check-out) by improving throughput
- Expand capacity by billable visit volume

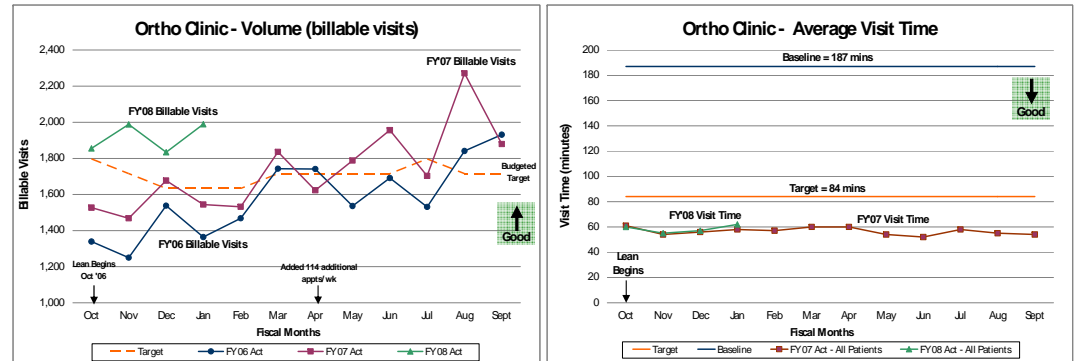
## The Team

- Orthopedics Leadership
- Orthopedics Physicians
- Orthopedics Support Staff
- Diagnostic X-ray
- Lean Program Team

## The Interventions

- Created standard work for increased efficiency
- Created level schedule including new/follow-up /urgent (next day) appointments, staggering appointment slots, staggering start/end times for physicians, which greatly reduced contention for resources.
- Created visual queues on the charts for patient tracking
- Added an additional 114 appointment slots per week, including urgent appointment slots, which resulted in an increase in captured volume

## The Results



Metrics	Baseline (Oct '06)	Target	Results (YTD)
<b>Average Visit Time</b>	187 Minutes	84 Minutes	57 Minutes
<b>Budgeted Volume</b>	<b>Under</b> Budget by 12%	<b>Exceed</b> Budget by 12%	<b>Exceed</b> Budget by 11% (Apr – Jan)

## Lessons Learned

- By decreasing the average visit time, physicians we were able to see more patients
- Once physician's efficiency increased, we were able to add appointments to each physician's panel
- Being open to major change can positively impact patient care. For example, having any available physician see a new patient, patients could be seen the next day for urgent needs (no patient was turned away).

## Next Steps/What Should Happen Next:

- Partner with NOPCO, Orthopedics' in-house brace supplier, to further improve flow in the clinic
- Continuously improve!

