The Problem
The inpatient physical therapists were unable to perform timely evaluations to facilitate A.M. discharges and to ensure the priority patients were being seen.

• Staff were unaware of teammates who were overloaded with discharges or priorities until early afternoon.
• Staff had difficulty in determining which patients were of highest priority for treatment.
• We initiated the improvement effort due to the frequency of hospital wide “code helps” and increased capacity.
• This effort directly impacts the inpatient physical therapists, nursing units, case managers, patients and throughput.

Aim/Goal

• Treat all patients who are ready for discharge that day and require PT before 1PM.
• To standardize the language and definitions for prioritizing patients and improve staff’s decision making in determining which patients to treat.
• Meet our standard of addressing consults within 24 hours of referral.

The Team

• Inpatient Physical Therapy Department
  o Deb Adduci, PT, Clinical Manager Inpatient PT/OT
  o Ryan Meyers, PT, DPT
  o Lori Gendreau, PT, DPT
  o Melissa Aloisi, PT, DPT

The Interventions

• We revised our prioritization system for patient care to include absolutes, highs, and others.
• We initiated a morning huddle for the inpatient PT staff. The following questions were asked:
  o “Who needs help with absolute discharges for this morning?”
  o “Who needs help with high priorities for the day?”
  o “Who can help with discharges this morning?”
• Following morning huddle, an email was sent to the staff to relay the information provided during huddle.
• We designed a white board to provide a visual display of each nursing unit, staff member covering, and the priorities for the day to facilitate distribution of help. The board is updated before 2 PM and used in place of an afternoon huddle.

As an ongoing performance measure, we surveyed staff to determine satisfaction level with current practice and perceived improvements.

Data was collected from Farr 3 to analyze timeliness to consults in order to determine if improvement occurred.

The Results/Progress to Date

Lessons Learned
Our goals to improve our department's timeliness can be achieved with improved teamwork, communication, and standardization but it is an ongoing process. Our prioritization will require further revisions to adequately capture our patient population and improve standardization among therapists.

Next Steps/What Should Happen Next

• Ongoing Development and clarification of standards and more thorough training with staff
• Identify objective measure to map progress and further analyze achievement of our goal to complete PT evaluations for patients awaiting discharge
• Establish a standardized format for the script of the morning huddle email that is sent to staff

For more information, contact:
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