Blood Bank STAT Turnaround Time
Tracking our Steps to Improve our Process
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The Problem
Monitoring of STAT type and screen turnaround times (TAT) is a key indicator in a blood bank quality management program. Current guidelines state a STAT type and screen result will be available within 75 minutes. A recent audit showed a failure rate of 24%, delaying transfusions and potentially impacting patient safety.

Goal
Our goal was to identify weak links and inefficiencies in our process enabling 100% compliance with TAT in 3 months. Our aim is to continue this level of achievement by routine auditing.

The Interventions
• Mapped out our process which established 22 separate steps
  o Patients without a blood bank history (New Patients) require a retype. A second sample is also requested to confirm their blood type if a crossmatch is ordered. This can delay TAT and is outside blood bank control.
• Zeroed in on certain key steps for time stamping
• Determined that a highly visible prompt was needed to alert the lab that a STAT specimen was in need of testing
• Developed a bright yellow time tracking card as both a prompt and an avenue to record the predetermined critical timing steps. A card was filled out for every STAT, 24 hours a day, for 30 days

Lessons Learned
• There was some concern that the cards would be cumbersome to fill out and take up tech time. In the end, many techs liked the card as a way to keep on top of the workload—a constant visual reminder to keep turnaround times on track
• We discovered that some steps did not add value to our process and actually caused time delays

Next Steps
• Pursue an improvement opportunity identified in our crossmatch procedure and complete another process improvement (Plan-Do-Study-Act) cycle.
• Continue auditing of TAT

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