Context/Opportunity
The Infusion & Pheresis department provides two distinct services to the BIDMC population. It provides Infusion Services to a diverse patient population and procedures such as Apheresis and Stem Cell Collections to both the inpatient and ambulatory population. Due to the varied nature of services and unpredictability of volume, patient scheduling became problematic. It became increasingly more difficult to accommodate patients in the time frame that they needed to be seen. This in turn decreased patient satisfaction.

Goal
To increase the availability of appointment times and to increase the efficiency of physical resources and staff time.

Team
- Ryan Graue, Sr. Project Manager, Improvement & Innovation
- Ayad Hamdan, Medical Director, Infusion & Pheresis
- Theresa Normile, Nursing Director, Infusion & Pheresis
- Cindy Ferrucci, Resource Nurse, Infusion & Pheresis
- Michelle Knox, Resource Nurse, Infusion & Pheresis
- Deb Melia, Resource Nurse, Infusion & Pheresis
- Sue Nessen, RN, Infusion & Pheresis
- Irene Jordan, Applications Specialist, Ambulatory Systems

Interventions
Booking methodology: Process changed from booking patients to nurses to booking patients to chairs.

Nurses’ schedules: Schedules changed to create consistent coverage throughout the week.

Booking parameters: Practice Assistants were trained to book appointments with specific parameters.

Space reconfiguration: Dedicated space was created to accommodate Procedures and Urgent Visits.

Results/Progress to Date
Comparing 6/2015-12/2015 to 6/2014-12/2014, kept visits per clinic day increased 13% (37.4 vs. 33.1), and kept treatment hours per clinic day were up 7.3% (96.4 vs. 89.8).

Lessons Learned
Nursing schedules were changed from fixed to variable, which was a culture change for staff that required leadership and open communication. Also, specific scheduling parameters (such as limitations on how many patients can start simultaneously) needed to be explained in detail to help front desk staff learn.

Next Steps
- Separating Infusion “Pods” and Procedure Rooms
- Building and rolling out an Appointment Finder tool
- Exploring additional creative scheduling opportunities for patients and providers (e.g., adjusting staggered starts)