Solution: Restructuring Laboratory Quality Assurance at Maryland General Hospital

Organization: Maryland General Hospital
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IDENTIFICATION:
Maryland General Hospital has overhauled its Laboratory Quality Assurance Program. Our focus is on early detection, problem identification and solution follow-up utilizing information technology. Our approach incorporates people working together toward a common goal.

PROCESS:
1) To show how implementing nursing personnel accountability for the Point of Care glucometer testing process resulted in improved quality control accuracy and reduced errors.

2) Using information technology to show how staff training and follow-up can result in significant and sustained reductions in mislabeled specimens and improved tissue bank operations.

3) Demonstrate how the identification of specific error trends can be accomplished with the help of a laboratory incident database application that allows detailed analysis of the occurrences for process improvement.

SOLUTION:
The first case study involves our Point of Care glucometer program with a sustained reduction in both patient identification errors and quality control failures after instituting a “3 Strikes You’re Out” policy. The second case study involves a continuous reduction of mislabeled specimens using an automated email “nag” notice to the nursing manager of overdue occurrences. The third case study involves the improved tissue management for the Operating Room after the Transfusion Service was assigned the responsibility for its management. The fourth case study involves the use of the Laboratory Director’s Occurrence Summary Report. This report identifies the most frequent types of occurrences with drill down ability to the individuals associated with each phase and process deviation. We can identify training needs and continuously review and revise the Quality Assurance department’s priorities and focus. We believe that process improvement involves continuous accountability and feedback. Over the past few years we have implemented system and people focused processes using information technology to ensure continuous quality improvement.