Improving patient care in the ED via Meditech Patient Tracking System.
Saint Agnes Hospital

Program/Project Description.
The problem was reliably establishing that blood draw is completed before antibiotics are given in the ED. It was difficult for the nurses to know when the lab had received the blood specimen so that antibiotics could then be administered. Baseline data existed from the Pneumonia Core Measure. The goal was to raise the compliance to 100% blood draw for culture recorded before antibiotic is given and maintain 100% compliance. After implementation, the data abstracted for the Pneumonia Core Measure establishes the success of the solution.

Process.
An interdisciplinary team met and initially devised a color-coded alert system. The phlebotomists placed a yellow adhesive-backed dot on the patient's ID wrist band after they completed the blood draw. The phlebotomist did not always immediately enter the information electronically and sometimes the yellow dot came off the wrist band. Problems persisted with coordinating the timing of the antibiotic. A technologically-oriented ED physician suggested that an enhancement of the Patient Tracking System in Meditech might more reliably serve the purpose of clearly establishing that the blood draw was recorded in the lab before antibiotics are given.

Solution.
IS programmer added column in our Meditech ED Management Module for tracking blood culture order and draw. Green icon was activated in the Meditech ED Patient Tracking System by the lab when blood draw was recorded. This icon notifies nurses that patient blood draw for culture is recorded in Meditech and an antibiotic may be given. Color-cued posters were placed to remind nurses. The enhancement to the Patient Tracking System was discussed at the ED Staff Meetings.

Measurable Outcomes.
Antibiotics are now consistently given after the blood draw is recorded. The solution was put in place in mid-September. Performance increased to 100% in October and was maintained at 100% (except for the following February, when there was one fallout.

Sustainability.
ED staff education and reminders will be done. Performance data are monitored monthly and reported to the ED administration and physician staff.

Role of Collaboration and Leadership.
Teamwork and collaboration played an important role in the solution. Partners and participants included ED physicians, ED nurses, phlebotomists/lab techs, IS programmer, ED administration, Q.I. Core Measure nurse, Printing Dept. St. Agnes's leadership shared the vision for success and supported the project by encouraging the required utilization of resources.

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