



Breast Health Center Quality Outcome Study on Yearly Screening Mammograms

2018

Topic/Problem

In January of 2018, a software program was built into Meditech that allowed the center to run reports according to Birad scores. Reports were run on Birads 1 and 2 for patients who were due for a mammogram in January 2017 through January of 2018. We found that approximately 200 women per month were not returning for their yearly mammograms.

Methodology

The breast health center staff called a random sample of 212 patients and notified them that they had missed their yearly screening. The following reasons were reported as to why patients had not completed their mammogram or could not be reached when called:

1. Told by their physician that screenings can be every 2 years
2. Moved to another location or facility
3. Never received a reminder letter
4. Incorrect phone number listed
5. Unable to reach and left a message
6. No longer has insurance

The Breast Health Center looked at the current processes that were in place to try and find ways to improve appointment reminders and to ensure correct addresses and phone numbers were listed in the system for the patients. The following problems were identified.

1. After reminder letters were mailed, 5 – 10 letters per day were returned the following week due to the wrong addresses listed on the envelopes. Most letters had the physical address listed and the patient received their mail at a PO Box.
2. Phone numbers to reach patients were incorrect in the system, so we were unable to call and correct the address.
3. Patients who missed their appointments were not being called and rescheduled immediately
4. Reminder calls about scheduled appointments were no longer being done due to a decrease in ancillary staff.

Initiatives/ Interventions needed for Resolution

The following measures were communicated to the Breast Center Staff, registration and scheduling. These measures were implemented in the 4th quarter of 2017 and have continued through 2018.



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1. Never Received a Reminder Letter An upgrade in Meditech allowed registration to identify a physical mailing address and a post office box address. Either address can be listed as the mailing address.
2. Incorrect phone numbers listed on patients. Scheduling and Registration were notified that the staff was finding incorrect phone numbers listed on patients after they had called to schedule a screening mammogram. Both Scheduling and Registration will clarify phone numbers at time of service.
3. Missed yearly screening mammograms. Our front desk personnel agreed to call patients within 24 hours of a missed appointment. In the first month. Registrars and front desk personnel agreed to take on more responsibility and began calling patients that had missed their yearly screening and placed appointment reminder calls for patients coming in the next day.
4. Patients told every 2 years for screening mammograms – Based on the recommendations of the American College of Radiology (ACR) for annual mammograms for women starting at age 40, the Breast Health Center implemented an educational campaign for patients and physicians about the importance of yearly screenings through daily encounters, email, provider meetings, and social media. The education included videos, handouts, and community outreach speaking engagements. New educational videos about yearly screenings by the ACR were posted on BMH social media.

Summary of Findings

Overall the center has seen a decrease in the number of result and reminder letters being returned due to the wrong address. The registrar calls the patient when these are returned and addresses are immediately corrected and mailed again. Both registration and scheduling have been checking patient's current phone numbers at time of service and making corrections. When calling patients for upcoming appointments, the staff said they noticed fewer incorrect numbers. The center has seen a significant result by calling patients immediately after a missed appointment. 42% rescheduled and thanked the staff for calling them. We believe the process improvements /interventions we put in place played a significant role in these improvements.

Reports for Birads 1 and 2 for 2018 continue to show 200 or more patients not returning for their yearly screening mammograms after our process improvement measures were in place, so the center has not seen an overall improvement in this result.

Corrective Action

The center will continue to work with registration and scheduling to confirm correct addresses and phone numbers. Staff will continue with appointment reminder calls and missed appointment calls within 24 hours. We will also provide education to physicians and their patients on the importance of yearly mammograms.

The Breast Health Center will continue to assess this problem looking for any new process improvements that can be implemented through management and community education. Education will remain a focus of the center and we will provide information on the importance of yearly mammograms starting at age 40 and continuing as long as women are active and healthy.