

UNC CHALLENGE: IMPROVE NURSE AND PATIENT SATISFACTION



9/30/12

Online Nurse Advice

Currently telephone triage is expensive and not reimbursed, and many practices are looking for ways to save time and reduce cost. UNC offered Online Nurse Advice in an NIH-funded study.

About UNC-Chapel Hill Campus Health Services

UNC-Chapel Hill Campus Health Services is a premier health services provider serving over 28,000 patients affiliated with the UNC undergraduate, graduate, and PhD programs. They provide ambulatory primary medical care, mental health services, and specialty services including obstetrics/gynecology, orthopedics, and dermatology along with wellness programs. They offer expert, student-centered, inclusive, and comprehensive health care and wellness promotion to support academic success. Their mission is to help build skills for a healthy lifetime by fostering resiliency and mastery of self-care in a global environment.

Problem

The triage nurses at Campus Health relied on a printed protocol book to guide their telephone triage process. If a nurse didn't have a lot of experience with a particular chief complaint, they would open the triage book and physically turn to the protocol page. In their workflow, a different nurse was handling triage every day. These difficulties in providing timely care were exacerbated because their patient population is highly technical as well as highly impatient with the traditional telephone.

Triage calls at UNC-CH Campus Health Services come in through a single number, and a telephone tree offers the option for the nurse line. When non-clinical staff answer, they can take initial information and forward to the nurse line. If the nurse line is busy, calls go to voice mail where the nurse will periodically listen and call patients back. Nurses felt that phone tag was often impossible, with a high number of their patient voice mailboxes that were full or never setup, so the nurses couldn't leave messages but just had to call and call until they got through.

Solution

UNC Campus Health Services implemented Keona Health's triage technology, and then studied their implementation through an NIH grant. Dr. Mary Covington, Director of Campus Health Services, led the implementation and study.

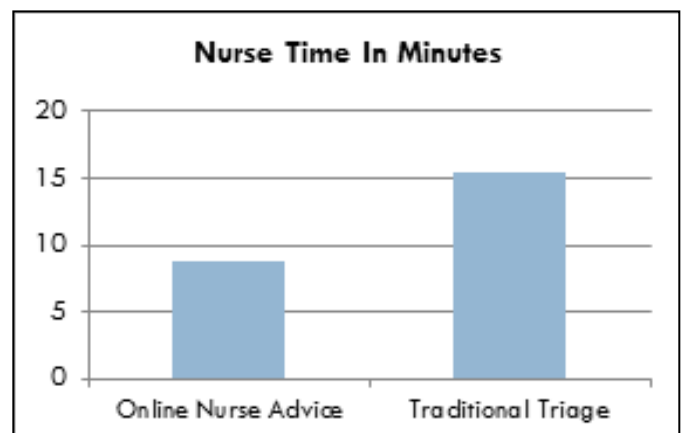
“Through our partnership with Keona, we demonstrated the ability to improve nurse efficiency, maintain safety, and improve satisfaction for patients who used it. We're excited to continue offering this solution to our student body,” said Dr. Covington.

Summary of Findings

UNC Campus Health conducted a study, funded by the National Institutes of Health, to measure the operational improvements of incorporating non-clinical electronic triage protocols. This study indicated that Online Nurse Advice was up to 43% faster for nurses than traditional telephone triage. It helped patients get needed care sooner in 32% of encounters. 77% of patients said they'd use it next time they had a health problem to save time and get reassurance.

Nurse Review Time

The Keona Health process allows patients and non-clinical staff to conduct the triage interview. This reduce's the burden on the triage nurse. The speed of the triage nurse's review process in Keona Health was compared to a traditional telephone triage operating time. The result was that Keona Health was up to 43% faster per encounter for the triage nurse than traditional triage. Looking at cases where the patient was triaged and no home care advice was given, traditional triage had an average handling time of 13 minutes per encounter, and Online Nurse Advice had a significantly lower average time of 8.7 minutes per encounter (p-value = 0.04).



Improving Outcomes and Cost of Care

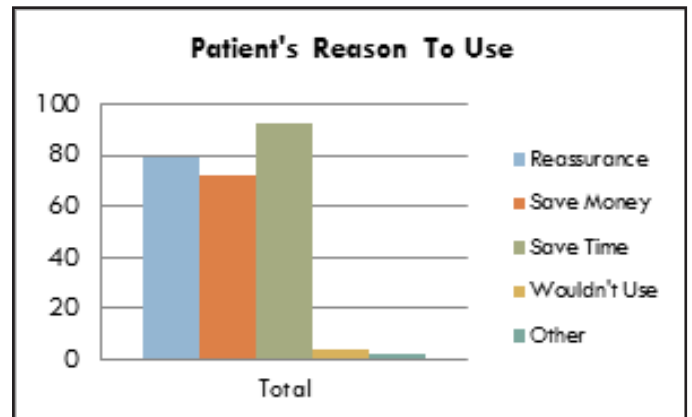
With the advent of value-based care, it's more important than ever to help patients achieve better outcomes at lower cost. The study compared the patient's predisposition at the beginning of their encounter to the disposition assigned by the nurse at the end of the encounter. Keona Health reduced the cost of care by helping patients avoid inappropriate ED visits in 6.3% of encounters. It also helped improve patient safety by getting them needed care sooner in 32% of encounters.

Patient and Nurse Satisfaction

Patients surveyed after they completed their encounter through Keona Health and found a 79% satisfaction rate. Additionally, the nurses all reported higher satisfaction with Keona Health than their prior workflow.

Patient Demand

Further, the study measured how many patients would use the online portion of Keona Health next time they got sick, and what are the top reasons for using it. 77% were moderately, very, or extremely like to use "Online Nurse Advice," as Keona's patient website was called, the next time they had a health problem. The most popular reason for using it was to save time, followed by getting reassurance and saving money on inappropriate care.



ABOUT KEONA HEALTH

Keona Health optimizes the telephone triage workflow, improving the standard of care while increasing patient satisfaction. We believe relationships matter. Keona Health is committed to give patients trusted advice from their personal medical advisor, anytime, anywhere.

While other technology seeks to commoditize healthcare, our philosophy sets us apart. We bring automation to enhance the relationship while keeping care personalized. To learn more about Keona Health, or see a demo, please visit us at <http://keonahealth.com>.