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LBJ ENT Pre-Op Wait Time Scheduling Innovation

The HCHD Innovation strategy is to bring forth new ideas that will improve patient care, associated processes and the work environment.

By virtue of his recently implemented Process Innovation, Dr. Y. Etan Weinstock, Chief of ENT services at LBJ General Hospital, certainly qualifies as an Innovation Trailblazer.

A long-standing challenge for the LBJ ENT team was the issue of how to reduce the waiting times for patients pending surgery. Prior to Dr. Weinstock's patient scheduling innovation, ENT outpatient surgery pre-op wait times could exceed 3 hours. The reasons for these inordinate delays included surgeons not posting anticipated case length, un-programmed case order changes, and patients being called on short notice about schedule changes.

The new pre-surgical wait time goal set by Dr. Weinstock and his team was targeted at 90 minutes. The process innovation called for a designated pre-op nurse to work with and make timely contact with the patients (two day advance patient notification) and a faculty surgeon being responsible for arranging case order and minimizing case order changes, as well as predicting surgical case length based on the type of procedure and clinically benchmarked data. Actual OR start times were then compared to predicted start times and estimated surgical times were compared to actual times in surgery. Reducing variation became a team focus.

As a result, wait times for these ENT cases have plummeted to an average of 88 minutes with the net reduction in overall wait times of almost 98 minutes or 52 percent.

The HCHD Innovation Network extends congratulations to Dr. Weinstock and his LBJ team of Innovators for changing a process that has dramatically improved patient care. As a result, patient and staff satisfaction has improved dramatically as well.

"Innovation Is Creativity With A Job To Do"
John Emmerling