

**Decreasing Wait Time Systematically in an Outpatient Oncology Treatment Unit- Region 6**

**Purpose:** Decrease laboratory turnaround time and wait time for cancer patients through streamlined work flows.

**Sylvester  
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**Team Members:**

Dr. Fernandez: Medical Director	Debra Lewis: Nurse Manager
Angela Olier-Pino: CTU Director	Isaac Castro: Patient Access Supervisor
Lauren Gjolaj: Operations Manager	Melissa Martinez: Scheduling Supervisor
Glori Gari: Industrial Engineer	Ruthy Tascon: Phlebotomist
Juan Garcia: Laboratory Manager	Romy Perez: Nurse Manager

**Project Selection:**

It was discovered that the Outpatient Oncology Treatment Unit (CTU) was not meeting its Quality of Care Goal of Wait Time from Arrival to Chair and Laboratory Turn Around Time (TAT) < 30 minutes.

**Root Cause Analysis:**

A Pareto Chart of 92 documented delays was completed, showing that Lab TAT was responsible for 22% of delays and increased wait time inside of CTU.

Multiple tools and techniques, including a literature review, were utilized to identify potential causes. Using a systematic and data driven process, 14 identified causes were narrowed to 4 primary root causes:

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| 1. Departmental Silos Between CTU and Lab | 2. Departmental Silos Between CTU and Registration |
| 3. No Prioritization Process/Policy       | 4. Phlebotomy Staff Distracted                     |

**Solution Development:**

Through the use tools and techniques including a process flow diagram, analysis of the baseline data, pareto chart, and voice of the customer, a final solution was created that decreased touch points for patients from 8 to 4 through streamlined workflow centralizing registration, laboratory services and cancer treatment. We ensured that each root cause identified had a solution in the new processes.

**Implementation and Impact:**

After obtaining front line staff buy in and completing dry runs to ensure functionality, we formalized the new process through staff training, piloting, and implementation. Results were extremely positive with laboratory TAT decreased from 50 minutes to 24 minutes, resulting in a 53% reduction in TAT. Although only 16% of total patients were seen at the pilot location, there was a 26% in reduction in wait times for all patients. By saving minutes per patient per day, we were able to see an additional 6.84 patients per day, resulting in a \$2.8M increase in potential revenue.

**Lessons Learned:**

- 1) Cross Functional Teamwork is Essential
- 2) Keeping the customer at the center of our planning and focus will lead to success
- 3) Use Tools and Techniques to Achieve and Sustain Outcomes
- 4) Train, Train and Train Again
- 5) Sharing results publically makes everyone an owner of the process