Projects improve stat lab test turnaround times

Two improvement projects at Regina General Hospital (RGH) are getting laboratory test results of our sickest patients into the hands of Emergency and Cardiac Care physicians and staff more quickly. Stat tests are requested when a patient needs immediate, life-saving care.

“Ten per cent of emergency patients each week had a turnaround time for stat testing that exceeded the 70-minute benchmark,” said Virginia Marsh, Assistant Laboratory Manager, Regulatory Affairs. “Now, patients who truly need the stat service get the stat service.”

The improvements came about as a result of a Lean replication project at RGH Emergency that arose from an earlier mistake-proofing project in the Cardiac Care Unit (CCU). The projects sought to improve the time from when the unit notifies laboratory personnel of a stat blood order until the results are made available to the staff and physicians.

Not only are virtually all stat tests now done within the benchmark timeframe, but Emergency Department staff and improvement teams have reduced the average turnaround time for stat orders in that department to 46 minutes.

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Projects improve stat lab tests, cont’d

While about 10 stat orders a week exceed the Regina Qu’Appelle Health Region’s benchmark for an acceptable turnaround time “we are now able to break down the data and find out why the increased turnaround time occurs for these 10 stats,” said Marsh.

The turnaround time prior to the improvement work was 52 minutes, with 10 per cent of stat orders exceeding the benchmark.

At the same time, the number of stat orders a week from Emergency has been reduced from 8,000 to 600.

CCU has seen success, too, reducing the number of stat test orders from 35 per week to eight.

Prior to the improvement work, lab staff found the high volume of stat orders taxing. The amount of work became even more burdensome with the implementation of a new electronic patient identification system which required staff to input all stat orders into a data system. Staff found that many of the orders contained errors requiring follow up. They noted that while 40 per cent of blood work orders were deemed stat, many did not meet the medical criteria.

Lab staff wanted all orders to be done within the acceptable turnaround time and saw the Lean projects as an opportunity for improvement.

Through mistake proofing and replication work, they sought to improve the ordering practices in Emergency and CCU, so that all blood work was dealt with appropriately.

Several changes were implemented. The first was to re-introduce and educate staff on the appropriate use of the stat and urgent priorities. Standard work was created to assist staff with this task.

As a result, urgent orders, which were rarely requested, now make up 7,000 of the patient lab orders weekly from Emergency. Urgent test results are turned around within 50 minutes, well within the RQHR’s benchmark of 120 minutes. CCU volumes are much smaller but reflect a similar increase in urgent orders. An urgent order indicates lab results are needed for the timely treatment of a non-life threatening injury or condition.

Efforts were made to ensure the right people were doing the right job, and changes were made to the way lab orders are received and specimens transported. In Emergency, lab staff immediately enter patient data, and collect and transport stat specimens to the lab. Portering staff pick up urgent specimens at collection points every 30 minutes for transport to the lab. At CCU, dedicated laboratory personnel respond to requests for stat and urgent collections.

“Once the specimens are in the lab, the staff process stats and urgent orders immediately. Before urgent orders were treated in the same way as routine orders,” said Marsh.

Marsh says she’s pleased with the changes and that the lab will continue to follow-up with staff to hear their concerns and ensure the work is fine-tuned and embedded.

“The standard work, education and monitoring is working. And it’s patient first.”

The Emergency Department at the Pasqua Hospital will replicate these improvements.

Marsh thanks the original mistake-proofing team – Dr. Lourens Blignaut, Tyler Chiddenton, Glen Perchie, Mark Wyatt, Lorri Carlson, sponsor Marlene Smadu, fellow content experts Laurie Beitel, Angela McTaggart and Brad Cargill, the CCU and Emergency physicians and staff, and Portering for embracing the project.

Are you retiring in three to six months?

If so, the Regina Qu’Appelle Health Region’s Retirement Session on April 29 will provide you with valuable information to help you prepare. For an informational brochure and to register online, visit http://rhdintranet/eds/public/programs/Retirement/RetirementProgram.htm.
Clean hands save lives

In Canada every year, we see 200,000 health care acquired infections. It’s important to note that of those 200,000 – 8,000 people die annually. On average, fewer than 40 per cent of health care workers wash their hands at the appropriate times. This is simply not acceptable. Good hand hygiene practices are not optional. They are fundamental to keeping our patients, clients and residents safe and RQHR has a zero tolerance policy on non-compliance.

There are key times when you need to wash your hands:

1. When you enter the facility when you come to work;
2. Before client contact, including before donning gloves so you don’t cross-contaminate them;
3. When you perform an aseptic or clean technique;
4. When there is a risk of exposure to germs;
5. When you leave the client or the client’s environment, and;
6. When you go home – change from your uniform and wash your hands on the way out. Don’t forget, at the end of the day, you can take these germs home with you.

The Region has developed three new Clean Hands Save Lives hand hygiene videos to help staff, patients and visitors understand the importance of good hand hygiene.

Click on the link to meet Jim, Martha, Tom and Liz, and Kateri Singer, Manager of Infection Prevention & Control

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=b7yxjfhY3pM

You can also learn more about good hand hygiene practices by visiting the infection Prevention & Control intranet site http://rhdintranet/InfectionControl/public/HandHygiene/HandHygiene.htm or via the Internet at http://www.rqhealth.ca/programs/infection_control/hand_hygiene.shtml

It is up to us to protect our patients, clients, residents, visitors and families from germs.

Remember - Clean Hands Save Lives!

Team Scrub promotes good hand hygiene to kids

Hand Hygiene hits morning TV with Shawna Stevens, Regina Qu’Appelle Health Region, Environmental Health, Public Health Inspector and Team Scrub Captain.

Hand Hygiene isn’t just important in a hospital environment, it’s equally important to remember in our daily lives. Team Scrub brings the importance of hand hygiene to kids across Regina, making them a part of Team Scrub and teaching them proper hand washing techniques through fun, interactive activities and games. These kids, as Team Scrub members, teach hand hygiene to their family members and promote the prevention of the spread of germs and bacteria.

To learn more about Team scrub visit http://www.rqhealth.ca/programs/comm_hlth_services/pubhealth/team_scrub.shtml

Click here to watch the CTV Morning show interview http://regina.ctvnews.ca/video?clipId=555537&binId=1.1 167267&playlistPageNum=1

Click here to watch the Global Morning show interview http://globalnews.ca/video/1850029/importance-of-hand-washing

Did you know there is a right way to wash your hands?

Call the Infection Control Department at 306-766-3242 to learn more about hand hygiene or watch this video https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bQq2c1aIMW8&list=UUMGOQegdTVpzuk6pdOiTdjjw.

Help stop the spread of germs in the workplace through proper hand hygiene.
The Hospitals of Regina Foundation (HRF) invites employees of the Regina Qu’Appelle Health Region to view the 2015 Spring Home Lottery $1.25 Million Grand Prize Showhome located at 4333 Sage Drive in The Creeks.

**Viewing Hours:**
- Weekdays: 6 - 9 p.m.
- Weekend & Holidays: Noon - 5 p.m.

There are more than 1,930 incredible prizes to be won with a 1 in 25 chance to win. The Early Bird Prize is a 2015 BMW 428 xDrive Cabriolet or 2015 BMW X5 35i or $75,000 cash. The **Early Bird Deadline is midnight, April 17.**

To purchase tickets, call 306-347-3400 in Regina; elsewhere in Saskatchewan call 1-800-667-7760. You can also order online at [www.hrfhomelottery.com](http://www.hrfhomelottery.com). You can also get tickets at the Pasqua Hospital Finance Office, the Regina General Hospital Finance Office or the Wascana Rehabilitation info desk or Finance Office.

Proceeds from the HRF 2015 Spring Home Lottery will help purchase leading-edge equipment to enhance patient monitoring and infection control, safer medication management and improve patient movement and protection. With leading-edge monitoring equipment, our health care professionals will be able to provide proactive treatments and reduce setbacks in a patient’s recovery. Thank you for your continued support!

**Corporate wall walk video now online**

The Corporate Business Plan Wall tracks organizational progress towards the annual initiatives in the 2014/2015 Regina Qu’Appelle Health Region (RQHR) Business Plan.

The February 24 Corporate wall walk video is now on the Region’s YouTube channel at [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eEl9lmPczA](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eEl9lmPczA).

The video is also on the Region’s Intranet site, [http://rhadintranet/rqhr/StrategicFramework/Corporate/CorporateVisibilityWall.htm](http://rhadintranet/rqhr/StrategicFramework/Corporate/CorporateVisibilityWall.htm), and on the Lean website, [www.rqhrlean.com/_rqhrscorporatevisibility-wall.html](http://www.rqhrlean.com/_rqhrscorporatevisibility-wall.html).

You are encouraged to attend this and other RQHR wall walks. They start at 8:15 a.m. on the first and third Tuesday of every month. Wall walk schedules are also on Lean’s website, [www.rqhrlean.com/huddles.html](http://www.rqhrlean.com/huddles.html).

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**International Women’s Day**

International Women’s Day is celebrated on March 8, and was formally proclaimed by the United Nations in 1975. In Saskatchewan, it is a day for organizations to profile their work in addressing equality gaps and increasing public awareness about the history and significance of the day. This year’s provincial theme is *Influential Women: Agents of Change*, and it is designed to highlight women who have been influential in improving the lives of their peers, families and communities.

You’re invited to attend an International Women’s Day event on March 6 from 2-4 p.m. at the Women’s Health Centre (Unit 3C) at the Regina General Hospital, sponsored by the Ministry of Social Services, Status of Women Office. Stop by to enjoy coffee, door prizes and snacks. Visit [www.internationalwomensday.com](http://www.internationalwomensday.com) for details.