



**Care Coordinator Forum  
Wednesday, April 23, 2008  
Minutes**

**Attendees:**

Deb Eckloff, RN, Marquette General Hospital, Marquette, MI  
Rachel Elliott, Priority Consult  
Mary Martin, RN, St. John Medical Center, Detroit, MI  
Brenda Nikkila, HealthEast Care System, St. Paul, MN  
Paul Pugsley, Priority Consult  
Jane Ray, RN, Salem Hospital, Salem, OR  
Deborah Spoutz, RN, St. John Medical Center, Detroit, MI

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**Intake Guidelines**

Attendees reviewed the sample Priority Consult “Outlier Patients” and “Second Opinion” guidelines. Outlier patients were identified as patients who are inappropriate for Priority Consult due to communication or cognitive difficulties. Deb Eckloff stated that they do not have any specific policies to address outlier patients. Rather, she addresses these patients on a case-by-case basis. The other attendees reported that they do not have written policies regarding outlier patients either.

Jane Ray asked if any of the facilities have policies for using interpretive services for taking patients’ histories through Priority Consult. The other attendees reported that they do not use interpretive services to complete the Intake process over the phone. Rather, if they are unable to take an accurate history over the phone they will schedule an appointment for the patient and arrange for interpretive services to assist at that time.

Attendees then reviewed the sample Priority Consult “Second Opinion” guideline. Each attendee agreed that when patients request to switch reviewing physicians, the new physician must first be advised of the patient’s request to be reviewed by another spine institute surgeon.

**Open Forum**

**Incarcerated patients:** Jane Ray expressed interest in the subject of incarcerated patients as her spine center is in close proximity to a penitentiary and her physicians treat a fair number of inmates. Mary Martin stated that St. John does not schedule or put incarcerated patients through Priority Consult. Paul Pugsley and Rachel Elliott discussed the Mayfield Clinic’s policy of bypassing Priority Consult for patients who are incarcerated. Mayfield schedules inmates for the next available office appointment without a Priority Consult review.

**Want spouse/friend/family member to give history:** Deborah Spoutz stated that she allows spouses/friends/family members to give the demographic information and non-symptom related answers, but she requires that the patient call in to complete the

symptom information. Patients remain in the Intake Pending queue until they have answered those questions themselves. She noted that family members and others tend to feel that they have some control over the process if they are able to participate in the completion of the information.

**Want the physician to address medication or work issues prior to an appointment:**

Mary Martin stated that St. John's physicians do not address work issues or prescribe medication prior to an office appointment. All attendees agreed with this policy.

**Managing the Intake Pending Queue**

Deb Eckloff checks the Intake Pending queue every day and attempts to contact the patients who have been in the queue the longest first. She will make three phone call attempts within 72 hours before changing the patient's status to "Noncompliant" and sending a letter. She also follows up with patients in the Waiting for Films queue. If she does not receive a patient's films within 2 or 3 days, she contacts the hospital or imaging center and requests that they mail or courier the films/disc to her. Debbie Spoutz also discussed her efforts to build relationships with surrounding hospitals and imaging centers at St. John so they would agree to send testing to the spine center.

**Average Time to Complete a History**

Mary Martin and Debbie Spoutz said that their histories take an average of 23 minutes to be completed. Some histories can take up to 40 minutes. Deb Eckloff said her average histories take 20 minutes and Brenda Nikkila's, on average, take about a half hour.

**Referrals**

The attendees each confirmed that they begin a record in Priority Consult for every referral they receive. In addition, some send correspondence to patients once their intakes are completed. Brenda Nikkila mails a welcome letter and a spine center brochure to each patient who has a history created. Debbie Spoutz sends a letter, spine center brochure, business card and sometimes a letter explaining how the patient's films will be delivered to the center.

**Possible Future Forum Topics**

Work-flow (responsibilities of each position)

Noncompliant patients

Incidental Findings

**Next Meeting Date**

Tuesday, May 6, 2008 11:00am EST

Topic: Ongoing Facilitation