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News Article

*Monday, June 8, 2015*

Data-Driven Insights Help Providers Improve Patient Care



Members of the Pediatric Hospitalist division proudly show their data dashboards at a staff meeting. *From left to right: Emily Kung, MD; Julie Ritucci, MPH; Ann Kao, MD, MPH; Jeanne Van Cleave, MD; Chadi El Saleeby, MD; and Kerstin Zanger, MD, PhD.*

At MassGeneral Hospital for Children (MGHfC), the transition to electronic health records has helped provide greater insights for improving patient care. A cornerstone of these efforts are the Division Level Quality and Safety Dashboards. Each of the 16 divisions at MGHfC created a “dashboard,” or a visual representation of data used to drive MGHfC’s patient care improvement efforts at the unit and practice level.

Leading these efforts is MGHfC’s [Quality and Safety team](#), which worked with each division to develop the dashboards. Providers and staff were encouraged to select, track and improve their performance in areas they felt were the most important for their practices. This included any quality improvement projects unique to each division and measures, like patient experience, that are common across practices.

Since divisions began creating dashboards last fall, more divisions have used data to drive practice improvement, said Kristen Solemina, MPH, Quality and Safety Manager at MGHfC. “We have used data in the past, but divisions have recently been using it differently. Previously, divisions looked at data as a check point to monitor how they’re doing, but not necessarily to drive improvements,” said Solemina. “Now, our staff and providers are looking more in-depth and using data to drive decisions to improve patient care.”

When the dashboard project began, the Quality and Safety team requested that each division consider priorities for improvement when selecting data points to assess. “Every division is different, so it was important for the divisions to choose priorities for improvement at the practice level and choose what is most meaningful to them,” said [John Co, MD](#), director of Pediatric Outpatient Quality and Safety at MGHfC, who helped lead the Divisional Level Dashboard Project.

In [Pediatric Gastroenterology and Nutrition](#), for example, staff and providers are using their data to improve patient access for new appointments. Data revealed that wait times for a new patient appointment at some locations were longer than others. “To improve this, we’re assessing our New Patient volume every month so we can get a sense of the locations where patients might be waiting longer for a New Patient visit,” said [Kriston Ganguli, MD](#), physician and Quality Champion for

Pediatric Gastroenterology and Nutrition. “For our Quality Improvement project, we’re monitoring vitamin D status in our patients with inflammatory bowel disease.”

Pediatric Gastroenterology and Nutrition continues to share insights with staff every month and with provider groups every other month, said Ganguli. “Some of the patient experience scores revealed system issues, which we’re also working on improving. Our Prior Authorization process is a good example, so we’re working on improving the system surrounding Prior Authorization to improve our staff helpfulness score.”

For the [Pediatric Hospitalist division](#), ensuring patients have seamless transitions of care once they leave the hospital was a priority. For their quality improvement project, staff and providers decided to further ease the transition by following up with a phone call to every patients’ primary care physician upon discharge.

“This was an important measure for delivering a high standard of care for our patients and for increasing patient safety,” said [Kerstin Zanger, MD, PhD](#), co-director of Pediatric Hospital Medicine at MGHfC. “We’ve received a lot of positive feedback from our patients’ primary care physicians about these phone calls and the discharge summary. It’s made the transition from hospital to home much smoother for our patients, their primary care physicians and for us.”

The Divisional Quality and Safety Dashboards are one of several initiatives at MGHfC designed to help create a culture of using data to drive improvements.

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