Specialty Task Force: A Strategic Component to Electronic Health Record (EHR) Optimization

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Background
- Optimization - next stage that follows after deployment of an electronic health record (EHR) system
- Concepts and designs planned and created by analysts may not be complementary to the users’ workflow
- Stress, anxiety and dissatisfaction with the system ensues resulting in poor “buy in”
- Redundant ticket submission creates backlog for Information Technology (IT) personnel resulting in delays in resolving issues and concerns with system
- Ineffective decision making process creates inefficiency during the optimization period.

Literature Review
- Optimization allows for evaluation of system and reassessment of users’ needs.
- A solid and well executed optimization infrastructure helps minimize unexpected end-user disruptions and tailors the system to meet regulatory agency goals and practice standards (HCl, 2014)
- Creating a specialty specific collaborative task force is efficacious and expedites resolution of users’ concerns through a more structured process.

Objectives
- Develop a systematic approach to expedite resolution of problems encountered with documentation system
- Streamline system wide decision making process, avoiding delays in approving changes
- Improve communication between analysts, managers, subject matter experts and end users

Methodology
- Created perianesthesia practice task force (P4G): Pre-Admission Testing (PAT), PreOp, PACU, Phase II, GI Lab
- Members: Perioperative/Perianesthesia Analyst, Clinical Informaticist, Risk Management, Pharmacy, Unit Managers, Educators, Subject Matter Experts, Clinicians in three hospital facility
- Conducted 90-minute monthly meetings to discuss documentation and system concerns
- Utilized audio/video conferencing and emails
- Conducted survey to evaluate effectiveness of task force

Survey Results
- Perception of Task Force
  - 90-minute meeting is optimal: 62% Agree, 67% Somewhat Agree
  - Improved Patient Safety: 81% Agree, 79% Somewhat Agree
  - Streamlined Communication Process: 28.6% Agree, 28.6% Somewhat Agree
  - Analyst as co-chair: 38% Agree

Outcomes of Optimization
- Creation of a practice-specific optimization task force ensures efficiency in dealing with end users’ problems and regulatory changes.
- Specialty/practice specific task force expedites deployment of enhancements, improving patient safety and users’ satisfaction
- Inclusion of individuals from various levels builds a collaborative decision making process, ensures “buy in” and stakeholders satisfaction.

Implications for Practice
- Creation of a practice-specific optimization task force ensures efficiency in dealing with end users’ problems and regulatory changes.
- Specialty/practice specific task force expedites deployment of enhancements, improving patient safety and users’ satisfaction.
- Inclusion of individuals from various levels builds a collaborative decision making process, ensures “buy in” and stakeholders satisfaction.