THE PROBLEM:
Inconsistent application of processes and standards for triaging patient phone calls in the VMG ambulatory environment
- Lack of established guidelines for addressing patient phone calls
- Variable levels of care-advice based on nursing experience
- Inconsistent and informal process to manage patient calls, which resulted in:
  - Delay of patient care
  - Symptom management based on urgency
  - Medication management
  - Numerous questions/concerns
- A call management system that was not measurable; inability to track or identify nurse-related phone calls

THE SCOPE:
Vanderbilt Medical Group (VMG) consists of approximately 125 ambulatory clinics throughout our community and surrounding areas, which generate over 1 million points of contact.
- To date, the clinics that have had Performance Improvement Office (PIO) involvement equal only 14% of the annual visit volume.
- Overall
  - There are approximately 1 million calls annually, of which there was no distinction between call type or ability to self-select to speak to a nurse.

OUTCOMES (THUS FAR):
- Management and distribution of patient phone calls
- Ability to report call types and volume
- Measurable outcomes through data tracking
- Professional collaboration involving providers, nurses and operations engineers that set the ground work for:
  - Improved teamwork and communication
  - Application and implementation of standards and policies
  - Clarification of roles and expectations

REFERENCES:
American Academy of Ambulatory Care Nurses
American Nurses Association
Vanderbilt University Medical Center Policy

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