Emergency Department Over-Utilization: Barriers to Use of Resources Available Through Our Primary Care Clinic

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Background

- Inappropriate visits to the emergency department (ED) are costly and divert needed resources toward minor health problems.
- Studies have demonstrated that in the pediatric population, 58 - 82% of these visits are for non-urgent reasons.
- Increased utilization of primary care resources could decrease the number of these inappropriate ED visits.

Objectives

- Evaluate how well our primary care clinic patients know about 2 of our clinic's after-hours resources:
  - After-hours "Mommy call" telephone line.
  - After-hours clinics (AHC).
- Determine if the number of ED visits by patients of our residency PPC could be decreased through improved education of available after-hour clinical resources.

Methods

- We created a 14 question survey that asked parents about their knowledge of our after-hours "Mommy call" telephone line and about our affiliated AHC.
- Also asked families if they would like information about these two resources and how likely they would be to use these resources if given information.

After Hours Survey

1. Are you aware that after-hours care is available through the "Mommy call" telephone line?  
   Yes ☐ No ☐
2. Where do you call when you have a question after hours?  
   Mommy call ☐ AHC ☐ Other ☐
3. How often do you use the "Mommy call" telephone line?  
   Never ☐ Once or twice a year ☐ More than twice a year ☐
4. Is there anything you would like to know about the "Mommy call" telephone line?  
   Yes ☐ No ☐ Other ☐
5. How likely are you to use the "Mommy call" telephone line if you had more information about it?  
   Likely ☐ Not likely ☐ Somewhat likely ☐
6. Do you know where the after-hours clinic (AHC) is located?  
   Yes ☐ No ☐
7. How often do you use the after-hours clinic (AHC)?  
   Never ☐ Once or twice a year ☐ More than twice a year ☐
8. Is there anything you would like to know about the AHC?  
   Yes ☐ No ☐ Other ☐
9. How likely are you to use the AHC if you had more information about it?  
   Likely ☐ Not likely ☐ Somewhat likely ☐

After Hours Survey continued

- We would like to know how likely you are to use the "Mommy call" telephone line if you had more information about it?  
  Yes ☐ No ☐
- We also want to know how likely you are to use the AHC if you had more information about it?  
  Likely ☐ Not likely ☐ Somewhat likely ☐
Methods

- A brochure and a poster were created that provide details about our PPC after-hour telephone line and 2 associated after-hour clinics.
  - This idea stemmed from Barnwell's previous ED brochure.
- Beginning 9/1/13, the brochure was distributed to every family seen in the PPC.
- We then compared all of our patients seen in our ED after the initiation of our education (post-intervention) with the number seen in the ED exactly one year prior (pre-intervention).

Poster

Results

- The majority of families surveyed in the primary care clinic were unaware of both the "Mommy Line" and AHC.
- Families would be more likely to use resources if given verbal and written information on these services.
- Clinic patients seen in the ED were more likely to know about the AHC but would still be more likely to use the resources if given information.
Results

- Of the 256 different children seen in the ED post-intervention, only 16 had visited our PPC and received the brochure prior to their ED use.
- There was a statistically significant increase in the number of ED visits in the population under the age of 2.
  - The PPC did however experience an increase in 325 visits during the same time post-intervention, which may help to explain the increased number of ED visits.

Discussion

- One month of intervention has not decreased the number of ED visits by our PPC clinic.
- We propose that over time, more patients will receive the educational brochure during a PPC visit, and thus, there will be a decrease in the number of ED visits with greater increased utilization of after-hour clinical resources.
- Data is still currently being collected.

Future Directions

- Evaluate for changes in the number of visits to the different AHC.
  - We hypothesize that there should be an increase number of visits with increased patient education.
- Follow-up surveys asking families if they like having the brochure and/or find it helpful.