Improving patient access to diagnostic services can lead to earlier treatments and better outcomes. And, patients who have access to testing services they need at a time and location convenient to their lifestyles tend to be more satisfied and more compliant with their treatment plans.

That’s why Ohio State’s Wexner Medical Center is offering patients greater involvement in scheduling their Radiology tests. It’s a move that is reaping positive rewards for patients, staff and our Medical Center.

Patient-centric scheduling is also an example of how Ohio State can Create the Future of Medicine Now.

"Timeliness in scheduling a diagnostic imaging examination or an image-guided intervention is meaningful only if the specific clinical needs and safety issues related to each patient are factored in early into proper study selection and planning before schedule options are presented to the patient. Otherwise, the patient's care might be delayed by mis-scheduling of the wrong procedure or to the wrong site, which is not discovered until the patient arrives. We want to avoid this problem by addressing these important matters immediately after a request for imaging services comes to be scheduled," according to Richard D. White, MD, chair of the Department of Radiology and director of the Imaging Signature Program.

Focusing on the patient, Medical Center leadership assembled a team in early 2012 that represented Primary Care, Patient Scheduling, Certification, Radiology and Strategic Planning.

Ryan Haley, director of our Patient Scheduling Center, explains that this multidisciplinary team identified snags and gaps in patient throughput. The team examined crowded vs. underutilized testing centers, patient satisfaction and compliance with scheduled tests, and how to provide testing and results in a timelier manner that could positively impact patient outcomes.

Valery Tarver of Management Engineering brought technical expertise to the examination of the scheduling process that helped uncover the reasons behind over- or under-utilized facilities and why some patients rescheduled, cancelled or simply failed to arrive for their tests.

“We found that our staff are very dedicated to providing service that is in the best interest of our patients and our Medical Center," says Haley. "Yet, at times this dedication could result in duplicated efforts or delays that slowed the scheduling process.”

For example, to protect patients and the Medical Center from charges that third-party payers might deny, staff at Primary Care sites often held Radiology orders until certification was completed. This could result in delays in tests being scheduled until after the patient had left the Primary Care site. The lack of patient input regarding the time, date and location of the test was identified as a significant contributor to rescheduled tests, cancellations and no-shows.

However, the central Certification team, located at the Ackerman Road complex, was already reviewing all imaging exams after they were scheduled. This duplication “resulted from the conscientious work of staff who were concerned with securing authorization to ensure insurance reimbursement,” explains Haley.

The multidisciplinary team worked together to create a new process – one that more clearly defines staff responsibilities while also offering more patient-centered scheduling. Patient preference now dictates the date, time and location of testing. The Certification teams are responsible for obtaining all insurance authorizations, freeing up resources in the clinics to provide better service to their customers.

When a patient at a Primary Care site receives a physician order for a Radiology test, the patient can:

- Have a Primary Care staff member call the Patient Scheduling Center to immediately schedule a test that meets the patient's desired date, time and location
- Take a card that includes information on the testing order, available locations and the Patient Scheduling Center number, and call for an appointment

This allows patients to have access to next-available testing options, which can provide the patient with same-day tests and results. The delay between ordering and arranging the appointment has been drastically reduced. Patient Scheduling Center staff also have computer access to the physician’s order and will contact the patient if a test is not scheduled within 24 hours. Physicians are informed if a patient opts not to schedule.

Radiology technologists also assist the Patient Scheduling Center with protocoling and handling escalated scheduling issues. The techs expertise further helps avoid any scheduling mishaps.

The patient-centric scheduling process is working well, Haley comments. Staff satisfaction has improved because roles and responsibilities are more clearly defined. Additionally, the scheduling team has indicated that they feel each scheduling encounter is more valuable and has a much-reduced possibility for rework.

The excitement of this project has centered on providing more timely care and improved outcomes for patients. It’s an innovation that has involved teamwork, communications and trust, and it has resulted in benefits to patients, staff and our Medical Center.

White states: “More and more we realize that the care of each patient begins with early orientation of the ‘big team,’ including our scheduling colleagues, to the special requirements and preferences of that patient. Optimal care for each individual must begin with an understanding of the individual situation and then in a large system like OSUWMC, which deals with many patient types, respond nimbly to personal needs, one patient at a time…this this our goal for delivery of imaging services.”

To learn more, Ohio State’s Wexner Medical Center faculty and staff can visit Create the Future Now on OneSource.
Robots aid efficient, quality care

Joe Meaney | The Ohio State University Wexner Medical Center

Patients, visitors and staff aren’t the only ones who have to navigate the corridors to get to the right place on time. Working behind the scenes is the Automated Transport System (ATS), a troop of 46 pre-programmed robots that help keep Ohio State’s Wexner Medical Center running efficiently and effectively. “We move all medical supplies through the system from bandages to breathing machines,” says Tom Schubert, manager of Material Systems, who manages the ATS. These robots, or Automatic Guided Vehicles (AGVs), make deliveries 24/7 to designated destinations throughout the medical center. The AGVs currently service the Ross Heart Hospital, The James Cancer Hospital, Doan Hall and Rhodes Hall.

“On average, the AGVs pick up and drop off 2,300 carts each day,” says Schubert. “We have the largest hospital automated transport system in the U.S.”

The AGVs transport various goods including carts of dietary and food items, medical and surgical supplies (case carts), linens and trash. In addition, the AGVs are programmed to prioritize deliveries so that the most important tasks are completed first, such as surgical supplies and patient meal drop-offs before trash and linen pick-ups.

In February 2004, the ATS replaced the overhead rail system that was previously used at the medical center. The new system uses nine elevators that are used only by the AGVs to drop off carts at one of 56 destination points throughout the medical center. Each destination point has a user-friendly touch-screen panel and allows hospital personnel to request carts to bring materials to their floor. Ohio State’s Wexner Medical Center is the second hospital in the U.S. to have an ATS.

“JBT (the system’s manufacturer) has classified us as their most well-run system in the world,” says Schubert. “We’ve had people visit us from around the world, such as Israel, Sweden and Ireland, who want to see a system that is performing at a high level and showing results.”

One of the greatest benefits of the ATS is the time it saves for staff, including nurses and nutrition techs, who can now spend more time with patients. Schubert says that since the installation of the new system, which has dedicated freight elevators for the AGVs, the wait time on staff elevators has been reduced by 30 percent. “Nutrition technicians can spend more time with patients now that they don’t have to manually pick up their meals,” says Schubert. “They can put in the food order and they will receive a page while the cart is en route. The average drop-off time is six minutes, and some orders arrive in less than two minutes.”

Schubert says that the ATS saves Ohio State between $1-1.5 million every year, and the system, which was scheduled to pay for itself in seven years, was able to do so in just five. “Hospital real estate is expensive,” says Schubert. “The system has made the hospital run smoother and cost efficient. It allows each floor to hold lower inventory on each unit. The space that would ordinarily be used for supplies can instead be used for patient care.”

The system improves safety at the medical center, minimizing the potential for hospital staff to sustain injuries pushing heavy carts. In addition, the AGVs are outfitted with obstacle detection features that will stop the vehicle when a person or object is in its path.

From their office under Doan Hall, two staff members including Schubert monitor the system as well as two JBT employees who help with maintenance and system changes. By tracking the movement of the AGVs, maintenance staff are aware of the performance levels at all times.

“We are able to respond to a down or malfunctioning machine immediately to prevent any further problems with the system,” says Schubert. “We perform monthly checkups on the AGVs as well as a weekly safety checkup. We can also perform minor program tweaks to make the AGVs run more efficiently.”

When the new James Cancer Hospital and Solove Research Institute and Critical Care Center open in late 2014, the number of AGVs traversing the medical center will increase. “We plan on adding 18 to 20 more AGVs in the new cancer building as well as upgrading the technology and monitoring system,” says Schubert. Even though Schubert’s team and their AGVs don’t directly deliver patient care, the work they do behind the scenes supports our caregivers and helps ensure that patients receive top-quality, efficient care.

“JBT (the system’s manufacturer) has classified us as their most well-run system in the world,” says Schubert. “We’ve had people visit us from around the world, such as Israel, Sweden and Ireland, who want to see a system that is performing at a high level and showing results.”

Ohio State named ‘Distinguished’ hospital

Ohio State’s Wexner Medical Center has received the 2013 Distinguished Award for Clinical Excellence from HealthGrades, making us one of 262 hospitals nationwide and the only hospital in Columbus – to be on this distinguished HealthGrades list. Receiving this award puts Ohio State’s Wexner Medical Center in the top five percent of hospitals in the United States.

“We are pleased to be included in the elite ranks of hospitals nationwide that have demonstrated superior performance in caring for patients in the Medicare population as measured by HealthGrades,” says Steven G. Gabbe, MD, CEO of Ohio State’s Wexner Medical Center. “This award recognizes the comprehensive, high-quality care offered here across a broad spectrum of clinical specialties and patient care.”

To be eligible for this award, hospitals were evaluated for mortality and complication rates for at least 19 of the 27 most common inpatient conditions and procedures listed in the HealthGrades methodology. Hospitals were also evaluated on 18 procedures and diagnoses, including sepsis treatment and hip replacements.

According to the HealthGrades report, from 2009 to 2011 mortality rates for the procedures were 30 percent lower at “distinguished” hospitals (such as Ohio State) than at all other hospitals.
Finding accurate healthcare information

Abigail Jones

Tyler Masteman | The Ohio State University Wexner Medical Center

“Today, there is so much information about health conditions and treatments, it can be overwhelming for people to decide which sources are the most helpful,” says Abigail Jones, who has been the consumer health librarian at the Library for Health Information for 10 years.

Scouring the Internet and other resources for reliable health information may be challenging. The Library for Health Information, which is a branch of the Health Sciences Library, aims to provide patients with the most accurate information for their situation. “We guide people to the best, most current, evidence-based information about any health topic,” says Jones of her staff of 13 specially trained volunteers. In addition to serving patients, Jones and her staff are eager to serve faculty, staff, students and the general public as well.

Since its opening in 1996, the staff has strived to complement the information patients receive from healthcare professionals to enhance the patients’ understanding of procedures, clinical trials or illnesses. Patients are provided with personalized health information from the staff as well as computer and copier access and a list of useful Web sites. Information can also be mailed or delivered via phone. The staff ensures that information requests are confidential and follow all guidelines outlined by the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA).

The Library for Health Information has a variety of information sources including consumer health books, medical textbooks, pamphlets, brochures and access to online databases. Jones says that their overall goal is not to simply answer health information questions—the resources are selected as an educational tool to guide people to greater understanding and to enable them to have a better conversation about their health issues with their healthcare team.

The library is located on the fifth floor Atrium of Rhodes Hall and is open from 10 a.m. – 6 p.m. Monday through Thursday and from 10 a.m. – 4 p.m. on Fridays. There is also a 24-hour email (health-info@osu.edu) and a 24-hour voicemail (614-293-3707) service.

See and hear Cordero’s journey to Ohio State at go.osu.edu/Cordero.

Joe Meaney | The Ohio State University Wexner Medical Center

As the son of two elementary school teachers, Leandro Cordero, MD, received his fair share of advice growing up in Buenos Aires, Argentina. Cordero’s father, who had studied medicine to become a surgeon, gave him a sense of right or wrong—nothing in between. His mother gave him a different set of values, emphasizing the proverbial glass as half full and showing Cordero the warm side of humanity.

Influenced by his father’s interest in medicine and his mother’s passion for humankind, Cordero decided to pursue a medical degree of his own, attending the University of Buenos Aires School of Medicine in 1954.

After completing his medical degree, Cordero received his post-graduate training at Hospital Pedro de Elizalde in Buenos Aires and practiced pediatrics for four years in rural Ayacucho, Argentina. During this time, he not only developed a very lucrative practice but also his polo game.

“I established a sound reputation. I was very proud of what I did as a physician,” says Cordero. “At the same time, I also developed into a very good polo player.”

Cordero channeled many inspirational words from his parents into motivation for his career as a physician. “I recall my father, who was a very good surgeon, reminding me that the good surgeon has the hands of a kitten but the heart of a lion,” says Cordero. “And that has stayed with me through the years.”

Cordero completed his residencies and fellowships in Pediatrics, Epidemiology, Public Health and Perinatal research at the Yale University College of Medicine before coming to Ohio State in 1971. In addition, before arriving at Ohio State, Cordero served as a visiting professor at the Latin American Center of Perinatology and Human Development in Uruguay as well as a consultant in Neonatology with the World Health Organization.

Cordero believes that the key to adopting a new culture is dependent on the level of comfort you have with your own roots and culture. What eventually attracted Cordero to the Ohio State was the diversity of the resources and the people at this institution.

“I have always been comfortable. I have always been proud of my upbringing,” explains Cordero. “So when I faced a challenge, it was much easier for me because I never relegate what I was. I embraced my culture, and I embraced a new culture.”

Currently, Cordero is a faculty emeritus in Pediatrics and in Obstetrics and Gynecology at Ohio State. His clinical interests include arterial blood pressure monitoring in premature infants and bacterial airway colonization of mechanically ventilated infants. Cordero has published 80 scientific abstracts and more than 100 articles and manuscripts in addition to providing guidance for over 40 years to one of the most complete Neonatal Perinatal Medicine programs in the nation.

Even after a half century as a physician, Cordero is looking at the future of medicine and clinical research. “I look forward to next month, to next year. There are many, many things that still need to be done,” says Cordero.

See and hear Cordero’s journey to Ohio State at go.osu.edu/Cordero.

About ‘Journey to Innovation’

Diversity in people and ideas is a core value and strength of The Ohio State University and its Wexner Medical Center. The video series “Journey to Innovation” shares the stories of 12 foreign-born physicians who made Ohio State’s Wexner Medical Center their destination. Follow the series in Insight and online at YouTube.com/OSUMedicalCenter (search “Journey to Innovation”).

“Journey to Innovation” was made possible by a grant from the OSU Medical Alumni Society; Ismail Nahed, MBBS, MPH; the OSU Wexner Medical Center Diversity Council; and the Department of Marketing and Strategic Communications.
DAISY Awards for compassionate caring

At OSU Health System, the DAISY Award is given quarterly “to celebrate the compassionate care nurses provide every day with ongoing recognition presentations among the recipients’ peers.”

The DAISY Award is supported by the not-for-profit DAISY Foundation based in California and was established by family members in memory of J. Patrick Barnes. This recognition program is also supported by the American Organization of Nurse Executives and the American Nurse Credentialing Center.

Carol Reinhardt, MS, RN, ACNS-BC, CCRN – 9 East Rhodes
Nomination Submitted By: Kristin Coppel
Carol is the CNS on our unit. She is always a pleasure to work with. She wants to help the bedside RNs grow in their knowledge and skills and she supports the staff and patients in the process. She is tenacious, compassionate, hardworking, and never gives up until she finds the answer to your questions or concern. If she feels a patient’s needs are not being met, she is not afraid to ask a physician about the patient’s plan of care and why things are being done the way they are. She is not afraid of change, rocking the boat, or being a proactive voice for our patients.

Carol has blessed my life and the lives of many staff, patients and families on 9 East Rhodes.

Kelly Sadens, BSN, RN, CCRN – MICU
Nomination Submitted By: Ginny Castle
Kelly was caring for a patient whose clinical condition had been tenuous. She had cared for him for several nights and had developed an excellent rapport with his wife. The patient had expressed to his wife, prior to his illness, that he would never want to be “kept alive by machines” including chronic dialysis. The patient’s wife was certain that she would honor her husband’s wishes, yet she was conflicted. Kelly spent a great deal of time being a sounding board for this patient’s wife. She listened, she reassured her, and she offered support.

Witnessing Kelly’s efforts on behalf of this couple was humbling to me. It certainly served as a reminder that in spite of the technology in our environment and the intensity of the work we do, the kindness and caring that we show to our patients and their loved ones is as valuable as any other skill we use.

Tova Wiesenthal, BSN, RN – 9 West Rhodes
Nomination Submitted By: Ashley Trick
Tova showed extraordinary care when taking care of a patient, who was on our floor for many weeks. Tova not only bonded with the patient, but showed sincere compassion toward the patient’s daughters as they watched their mother deteriorate before their eyes. As end-of-life care was discussed, Tova stood by the family’s side and took the time to console them as best she could. Tova sat in the hallway and held the daughters as they cried during this difficult time. I could tell the amazing impact Tova had on their lives by the way they spoke of her with such great respect and sincerity. The daughters talked about how Tova was their “Angel” and how Tova soothed them during this tragic time in their lives.

It goes without saying that we all wish for such compassionate care for our loved ones during troubling times like these.

Staff of Ohio State’s Wexner Medical Center can nominate a nurse for a DAISY Award by going to OneSource > Magnet > Recognition > DAISY Award.

Here are the 2013 first-quarter award winners and excerpts from their nominations:

Nursing Research Day

Usha Menon, PhD, RN, FAAN, professor and vice dean of Ohio State’s College of Nursing, will be the keynote speaker at the 2013 Nursing Research Day, which runs from 7:30 a.m.-4:30 p.m. on March 19 at the Longaberger Alumni House. Research Day represents collaboration among central Ohio nurses.

BUT FOR OHIO STATE, EXPERT CARE WOULDN’T BE THIS CONVENIENT.

FastCare clinics provide quality care for common illnesses such as sore throats, rashes, earaches, coughs and allergies.

No appointment necessary, with evening and weekend hours available.

Visits start at $59 and, when applicable, we can bill your insurance.

Locations
Gahanna Giant Eagle
1250 N. Hamilton Road
Market District Giant Eagle
3061 Kingsdale Center

Hours
Monday-Friday: 8:30 a.m. to 8:30 p.m.
Saturday: 9 a.m. to 6:30 p.m.
Sunday: 10 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.

medicalcenter.osu.edu/go/fastcare