Central Scheduling

Lessons Learned Series

What really constitutes your incoming calls?

In one study we performed for a central scheduling department, we observed 194 calls and discovered only 61% of the calls resulted in an appointment being made, changed or cancelled! What constituted the other calls? Some of the more common reasons are listed below.

**Reasons for No Appointments completed for an incoming call:**

- Patient told to do something prior to appointment being able to set = 36%
  - Verify the test/procedure w/the ordering MD
  - Obtain insurance information/authorization/etc.
  - Obtain personal/health information re: the patient
- Transfer Callers to another department to complete the appt. = 24%
- Caller confirming an appointment time = 13%
- Caller confirming prep instructions = 8%

How many of your incoming calls result in a completed appointment? In this situation, the incoming call volume eventually becomes inflated since at minimum 36% of the 1st time callers have to call the department again to set an appointment. Of course, this department also incurred greater than a 20% abandonment rate. Historically, management struggled with the issue of adding resources which it never did while never really knowing what the staff was experiencing in poorly designed system/information requirements and poor outside department cooperation.