

# Customer representatives mean increased efficiency in radiology

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Adding customer service representatives to a computerized radiology workflow management system means improved patient and referring physician satisfaction and increased radiologist efficiency, an analysis of a program at Children's Hospital Medical Center in Cincinnati finds.

Seven customer service representatives now staff the radiology reading room from 7:00 am – 11:00 pm daily and are responsible for ensuring that referring [physicians](#) receive completed radiology reports quickly.

This means that the referring physician can get the report while the patient is still in the waiting room, says Alexander Towbin, MD, lead author of the analysis. The quick turnaround helps to alleviate patient anxiety and/or expedites necessary care, Dr. Towbin says.

Referring physicians can contact the customer service representatives if they have additional questions, and the customer service representative will put the referring physician in touch with the appropriate radiologist. Having a central phone number that the referring physician can use is more efficient, saving referring physicians the time and effort of making multiple phone calls, says Dr. Towbin.

The customer service representatives are responsible for documenting that the report has been provided to the referring physician. "Several studies have shown that a failure of communications is a causative factor in 70%-80% of malpractice lawsuits," says Dr. Towbin. The customer service representatives mitigate that.

Dr. Towbin notes that there are costs associated with adding customer service representatives to the [radiology](#) workflow. "We feel that the costs are outweighed by the benefits. The customer service representative position is entry-level. They are relieving radiologists of some of the administrative tasks, allowing the radiologists, who are the most expensive part of the workflow chain, to maximize their time reading imaging studies, conducting research and teaching" says Dr. Towbin.

**More information:** The study appears in the January, 2011 online issue of the *American Journal of Roentgenology*.

Provided by American College of Radiology

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