

Intervention boosts hospital discharge communication

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(HealthDay)—Implementation of standardized communication processes can improve the reliability of verbal communication between hospitalists and primary care physicians (PCPs) at hospital discharge, according to a study published online May 29 in the *Journal of Hospital Medicine*.

Grant M. Mussman, M.D., from the Cincinnati Children's Hospital Medical Center, and colleagues redesigned the process by which PCPs were contacted following patient discharge. They focused on standardization of the communication process, including assigning a single resident on each team primary responsibility for discharge communication; batching calls during times of maximum resident availability; automated process initiation through leveraging of electronic health record; and data transparency. The impact of interventions was assessed over time with a run chart.

The researchers observed an increase in the percentage of calls initiated within 24 hours of discharge from 52 to 97 percent, and the percentage of calls completed increased to 93 percent. The results were sustained for 18 months. Improvements in measures correlated with standardization of the communication process through hospital telephone operators, use of the discharge order to ensure initiation of discharge communication, and phone call batching.

"The results of this study may be of interest for further testing and adaptation for any institution with an [electronic health](#) care system," the authors write.

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