

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.