

Manitoba Health, Seniors and Active Living (MHSAL) supports reporting and learning from patient safety events. The focus of a patient safety review is to closely look at the health care system that surrounds and interacts with those giving and receiving care. The goal is to identify risks to patient safety and recommend the most effective ways to minimize risk and improve the delivery of healthcare.

Patient Safety Learning Advisory

Delay in Diagnosis/Treatment

Summary:

The patient saw their family physician regarding a lump in their breast.

The physician ordered an ultrasound of the patient's breast.

The requisition was completed but not sent through the electronic medical record used in the medical clinic.

Two months later, the patient inquired into the status of the ultrasound appointment. It was at this time that it was discovered that the request was not sent to the right location.

Keywords: delay in treatment

Device Name (if applicable):

Drug/Name/Fluid Name: (if applicable):

Type of Analysis: single event

Findings of the Review:

- The requisition for the breast ultrasound was not sent in a timely manner to the Diagnostic Imaging Department.
- This resulted in an unacceptable delay in determining the treatment required by the patient
- The provincially accepted standards of care for a patient with this presenting complaint were not met.

System Learning:

- Ensure that physician education regarding the use of the electronic medical record is complete and accurate. This will provide some reassurance that requests for investigations are being sent to the intended recipients.
- Ensure that physicians receive appropriate education and support in the use of the electronic medical record.
- Provide patients with appropriate communication when awaiting the booking of follow-up appointments. Provide direction to patients to contact their health care providers within a specific time frame if they have not heard anything back regarding pending appointments/tests.

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