

# UCI Medical Center

University of California, Irvine

*A Passion for Care. The Power to Cure.*

## **IMPROVING PATIENTS' SERVICE EXPERIENCE IN THE INFUSION CENTER BY REDUCING WAIT TIMES**

### **INTRODUCTION**

The primary performance improvement goal for the Infusion Center for fiscal year 2004-2005 was to improve patients' service experience by reducing patients' wait time from the time of registration to the time of treatment. A secondary goal was to plan and implement growth within the Infusion Center.

To establish baseline information, a survey was distributed to Infusion Center patients and 53 responses were received. It was found from this survey that 38% of patients had a wait time of less than 30 minutes, 28% had a wait time of 30 minutes to one hour, 23% had a wait time of between one and two hours, 6% had a wait time of between two and three hours, and 4% had a wait time of three hours or more. The survey also asked patients how they felt about having a Saturday appointment, and 76% responded that they would prefer or accept a Saturday appointment.

### **INTERVENTIONS**

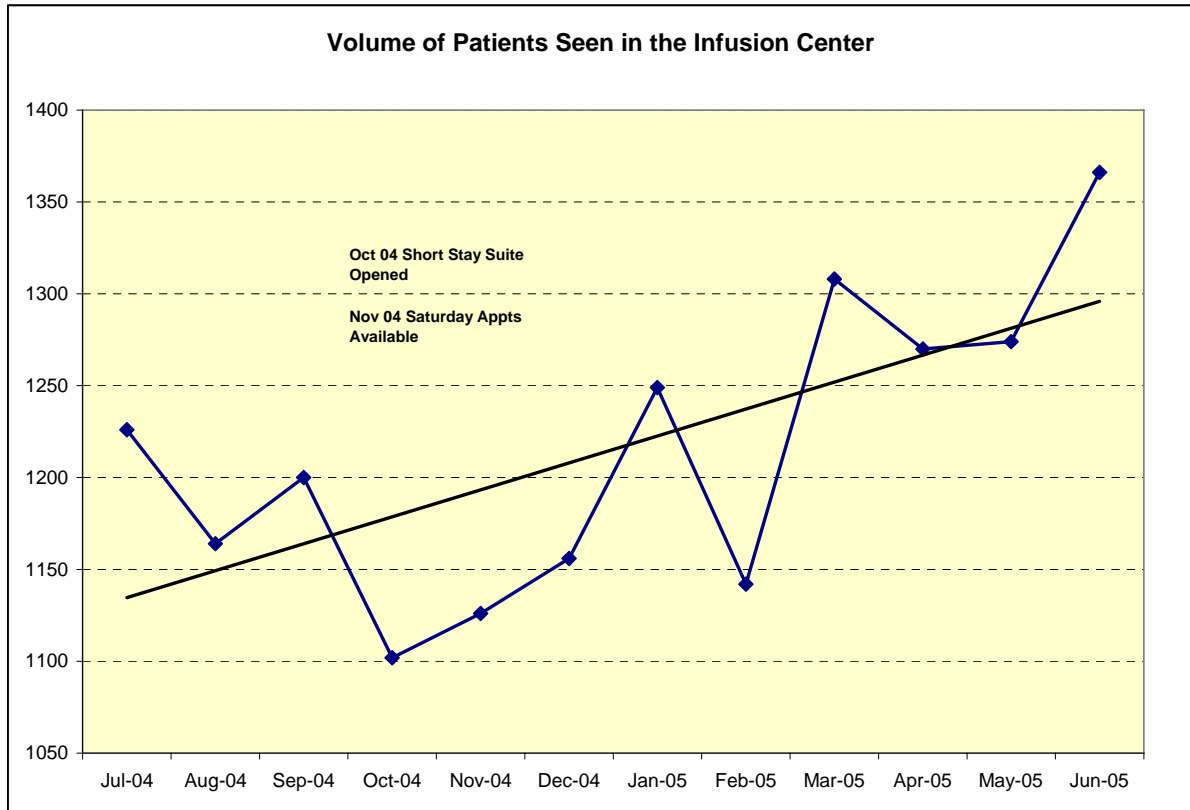
Wait time and growth of the Infusion Center were addressed by two interventions implemented in the Fall of 2004. In October 2004, a short-stay Infusion Suite was opened. The Suite, which houses five new chairs, is used for shorter infusions as well as non-infusion services such as injections, hydrations, and blood draws. The opening of the Suite offers approximately five additional appointments a day while keeping waiting times to a minimum.

In addition, availability of Saturday appointments in the Infusion Center for continuing patients was implemented in November 2004. Offering appointments on Saturday not only responds to the requests of the patients, but also provides additional capacity and offers greater flexibility to meet multiple-day regimens.

### **RESULTS/DISCUSSION**

A post-intervention survey will be conducted in 2006 to reevaluate wait times and satisfaction with services. Saturday appointments have allowed staff to schedule four and five day treatment regimens to include Saturday appointments. The additional day has also helped to level off peak volumes throughout the traditional Monday through Friday work

week. A more even distribution of work has enabled more chemotherapy treatments to be scheduled. In addition, separation of short-term procedures has allowed for more efficient use of the long-stay chemotherapy rooms and general total output for the Infusion Center. An increase in total volume of patients has been observed in the Infusion Center as shown in the following chart. Future plans include evaluation of a 23-hour unit, 7 days per week to meet increasing demands.



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