Background
Conventionally, doctors would fill up a manual charge form to bill for their specialist review and hand the form over to the ward PSA for charging. Very often, the manual charge forms were incomplete/ illegible/ not filled in/ lost in transit. PSAs would spend time checking with nurses/doctors or look through case notes for blue letter referral. This process led to:
- Blue letters not being charged on time
- Wrong charge codes are used

PSC will liaise with Business Office to open bill for amendments in order to rectify patient’s bill. With the blue letter referral going electronic, the charging process was reviewed to streamline and minimize charging errors.

Aim
- Reduce time spent checking with nurses/doctors for manual charge form
- Reduce time spent on manual blue letter charging

Method
PDCA cycle was applied to review the blue letter charging process.
A team was formed together with Office of Clinical Informatics (OCI) to trigger a task list for PSA to charge at real time. OCI communicated the implementation to doctors and in-service and hands-on training were conducted for PSAs.

In June 2017, the e-referral and charging process were piloted in general medicine department. During the pilot, all blue letter charges were monitored closely to ensure zero dropped charges. Full implementation was spread to all disciplines in January 2018.

Electronic Blue Letter Charging In Inpatient Wards
Yasmin.I 1, Lim.Y.W 2, Loh.K.C 1, Hii.S.J 2
Patient Service Centre 1, Office of Clinical Informatics 2, Inpatient Wards 3

Results
1. Reduction in blue letter errors by 86%
   Data provided by Quality & Risk Management

2. Reduction in time spent on blue letter charging: 1,983 hours

3. Reduction in dropped charges: Data provided by Finance

Project Impact

For Patient
- Reduction in billing errors by 86%
  (Eliminate complaints for late & over charging)

For Staff
- Time savings of 1,983 hours per year
  (Assuming 14,000 blue letter referrals)

For Organization
- Avoidance of dropped charges amounting to $144,000 per year

Conclusion
This is a hassle-free process that saves time & resources, increasing patients’ satisfaction, revenue and savings on manpower resources.

In January 2019, we implemented e-referral SOC appointment booking using the same solution.