

## INTRODUCTION

The current process of communicating appointment information from staff to staff and from staff to patient was error-prone, repetitive, required re-work and increased usage of appointment cards and envelopes.

## METHODOLOGY

A Rapid Improvement Exercise was held in November 2011 and attended by representatives from Inpatient and Outpatient Nursing, Specialist Clinics Operations, Call Centre, Rehabilitative Services and IT. An A3 Lean Standard Work Template was used for the exercise.

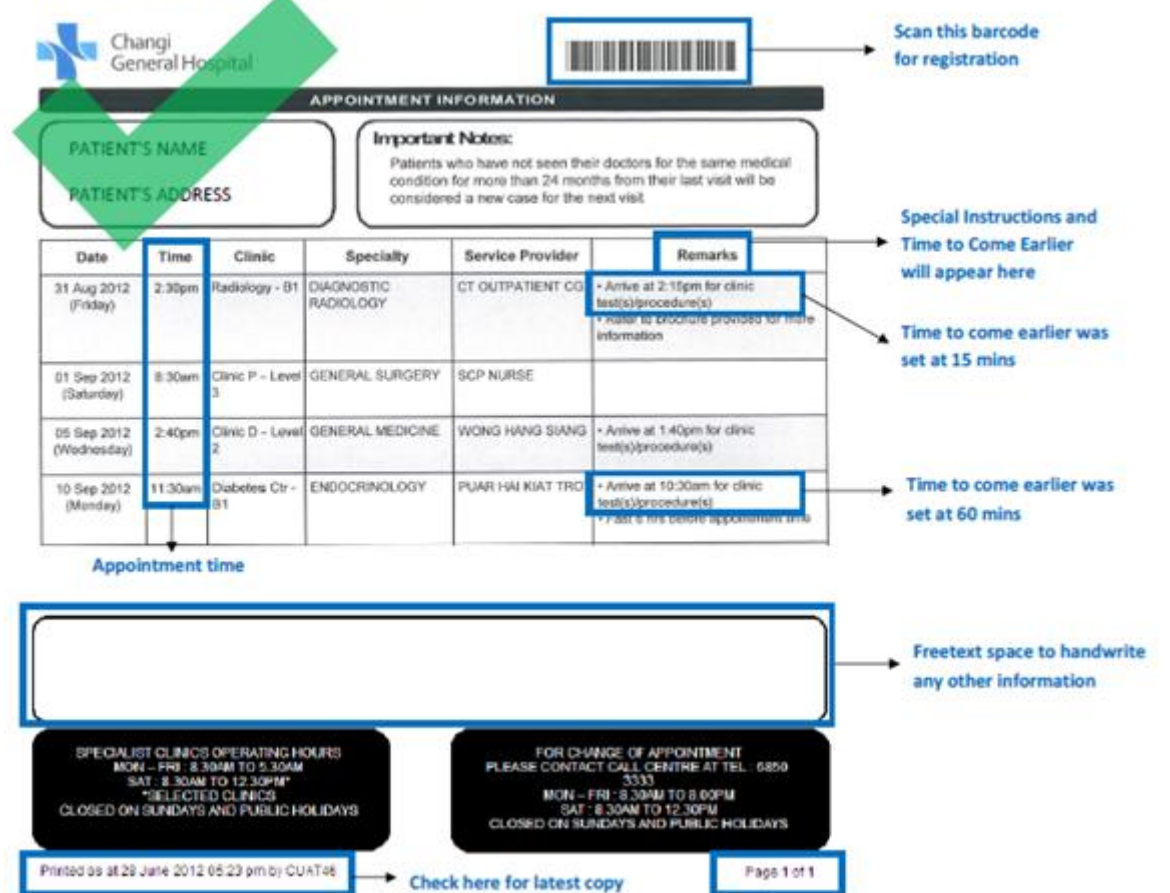
From this exercise, we collectively decided to create a Patient Appointment List to replace the existing appointment cards. Patients were surveyed using it and feedback was positive.

In Dec 2011 and Feb 2012, we started the transition by giving patients just one consolidated appointment card, instead of multiple cards in selected clinics and wards. Feedback from patients and staff was again positive.

In September 2012, after testing out prototypes, we officially rolled out the appointment list and stopped issuing appointment cards.

Sample of new patient appointment list

Appointment list with multiple TCUs:



The form is titled 'Appointment list with multiple TCUs' and is for Changi General Hospital. It includes a barcode at the top right with the instruction 'Scan this barcode for registration'. Below the barcode is a section for 'APPOINTMENT INFORMATION' containing 'PATIENT'S NAME', 'PATIENT'S ADDRESS', and 'Important Notes: Patients who have not seen their doctors for the same medical condition for more than 24 months from their last visit will be considered a new case for the next visit.' Below this is a table with columns: Date, Time, Clinic, Speciality, Service Provider, and Remarks. The table contains four rows of appointment data. To the right of the table, there are three callouts: 'Special Instructions and Time to Come Earlier will appear here', 'Time to come earlier was set at 15 mins', and 'Time to come earlier was set at 60 mins'. Below the table is a large 'Appointment time' section with a 'Freeltext space to handwrite any other information'. At the bottom, there are two boxes: 'SPECIALIST CLINICS OPERATING HOURS' and 'FOR CHANGE OF APPOINTMENT PLEASE CONTACT CALL CENTRE AT TEL. 6850 3333'. The bottom right corner says 'Page 1 of 1'.

## RESULTS

With the appointment list, we have managed to :

- Consolidate and chronologically list all appointments for each patient onto a single sheet of paper so that patients can keep track of all their appointments more efficiently.
- Reduce transcribing errors and legibility issues by getting the appointment-making staff to make selections in the appointment system with just a few mouse clicks, allowing the appointment information to be fully printed. Re-printing replacements/duplicates also becomes faster, but without compromising the accuracy of information.
- Allow the printing of the appointment list at every location that makes appointments, as opposed to only wards and specialist clinics being able to provide appointment cards while our Appointment Centre could only print appointment letters for single appointments and not provide appointment cards as replacement.
- Increase staff efficiency and lower overall cost by doing away with appointment cards that can only be used for a single purpose, as PAL utilises A4-sized paper that is already stocked in the appointment-making areas (inventory ordering, stocking, tracking, dispatching is simplified).

## CONCLUSION

With the Patient Appointment List, we have increased efficiency and effectiveness of the appointment information for patients' and staff's use, with positive impact on more than one department.

Sample of old appointment cards



The image shows a sample of old appointment cards. A large red 'X' is drawn over the top part of the card, indicating it is outdated. The card is titled 'Please keep to your appointment date & time. Consultation is strictly by appointment only.' It contains a table with columns: Date, Time, Clinic, Doctor, TCU, and Remarks. Below the table, there is a section for 'SPECIALIST CLINICS OPERATING HOURS' and 'FOR CHANGE OF APPOINTMENT PLEASE CONTACT CALL CENTRE AT TEL. 6850 3333'. The bottom right corner says 'Page 1 of 1'.