Optimizing Medication Alerts Through Implementation of a Medication Alerts Review Committee

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Background: In order to mitigate adverse drug events, many health systems across the country have implemented electronic health records (EHR) with clinical decision support (CDS). In 2009, The Health Information Technology for Economic and Clinical Health Act authorized incentives to hospitals that adopted "meaningful use" of EHRs including computerized provider order entry and CDS. When used effectively, CDS can have a great impact on patient care. However, a well-known drawback to CDS is "alert fatigue" Alert fatigue results when clinicians become apathetic to the alerts due to the shear volume of alerts they see regularly. The University of Kansas Health System (TUKHS) faces the same issues with regards to CDS and alert fatigue as many other hospitals around the country. Our health system currently uses the Epic® EHR system across both the inpatient and outpatient settings, as well as FDB Alertspace® to help guide decision-making for CDS.

Objective: The primary object of this project is to optimize medication alerts to ensure they are meaningful, actionable, and cause less alert fatigue. Secondary objectives include establishing sustainable workgroup processes to maintain alert optimization and reducing the number of inappropriate medication alert overrides.

Methods: This is a prospective, multi-center quality improvement project assessing and optimizing medication alerts from September 1, 2020 to April 11, 2021.At the start of the study period a survey was used to assess viewpoints on current medication alert practices at TUKHS and gauge interest in serving on a committee to optimize alerts.

Conclusion: The Medication Alerts Review Committee at TUKHS meets on a monthly basis to review alert data and recommend changes. Thus far, alert changes have been made to reduce the alert burden found with pregnancy/lactation alerts. This group will continue to meet monthly to optimize highly overridden alerts in an effort to reduce "alert fatigue".