

Process Flowchart

What is it and how can it help me?

A flowchart shows sequential steps in a process. It is used to identify actions needed, materials used, decisions that must be made, and people and time involved at each step. This tool can be used to illustrate any process, such as clinic flow, patient registration, billing, and supply chain management.

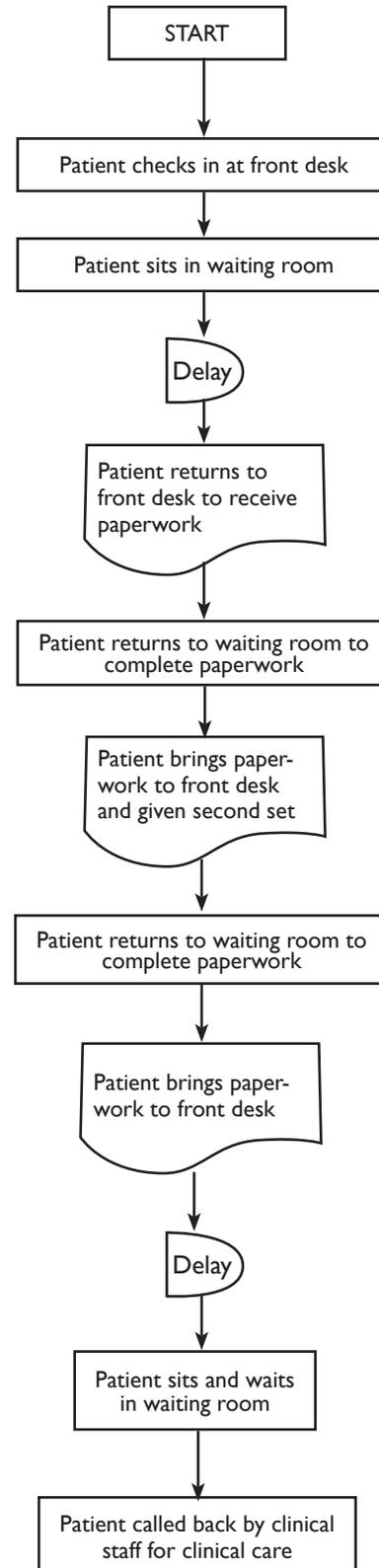
A flowchart:

- Deconstructs a process so that each step may be examined for areas of improvement.
- Communicates how a process is done.

How to use this tool:

1. With your team, clearly define the process to be diagrammed. Write its title at the top of a white board, or flip chart.
2. Decide on the scope of the process: where or when does it start and end? Discuss the level of detail to be included in the diagram.
3. Brainstorm activities or tasks that take place in the process. Write each on a card or sticky note. Sequence is not important at this point, although thinking in sequence may help the team remember all steps.
4. Arrange the cards or notes in the proper sequence on the wall.
5. When all activities are included and everyone agrees that the sequence is correct, draw arrows to show the flow between each. Use the symbols below to give a clear visual representation of the process.
6. Review the flowchart with the team and identify areas that are bottlenecks or present challenges to staff or patients.
7. Discuss potential opportunities for improvement.

Example



Process Flowchart Worksheet

TITLE:

Common Flowchart Symbols



One step in the process; the step is written inside the box. Usually, only one arrow goes out of the box.



Direction of flow from one step or decision to another.



Decision based on a question. The question is written in the diamond. More than one arrow goes out of the diamond, showing direction the process takes (often the answers are "yes/no")



Delay or wait



Input or output



Document



Symbol for start and end points