Issue/Process: Telephone Orders

Status: Approved
Action Requested: None

Reviewing Group: CPOE Steering
Date: 5/7/10

Issue/Background: Telephone Orders

With CPOE orders can be either CPOE, Verbal, Telephone, or Written. Virtua is targeting 100% CPOE adoption with some exceptions that support safe and efficient patient care. Verbal orders are covered by a separate policy. Telephone orders are issued when a physician is 1) not in proximity to the patient’s nursing unit 2) not able to access a computer or it is impractical to do so and 3) communicating by telephone with the nurse. To support patient safety benefits of CPOE, telephone orders cannot be used routinely. There are circumstances when telephone orders are necessary and support safe, timely, and efficient patient care.

Recommendations

Definition of Telephone order: A telephone order is one given by a provider when not physically present at the patient’s current location and when access to a computer is unavailable or impractical.

Policy: The use of telephone orders in a CPOE environment is to be avoided to the extent compatible with patient safety and care. Routine use of telephone orders in place of CPOE is not acceptable. Patient care at times requires the rapid provision and enactment of orders when physicians are otherwise occupied or access to a computer is unavailable or impractical. Examples of acceptable use of telephone orders include, but are not limited to, when the physician is driving, away from the home or office, engaged in activities like office hours or at night on call when access to a computer is impractical. Telephone orders that are felt to be inappropriate will be accepted and, if necessary, reviewed after-the-fact with the appropriate individuals including nursing management and the Medical Director of Operations. Virtua will track telephone order volumes and evaluate the appropriateness of such orders issued by outlier providers.

When the physician gives a verbal order:

- All orders must be read back to and verified by the physician
- If the receiving clinician is not physically accessible to a computer, they may take the order on paper (not in medical record) and read back to provider
- If the clinician has written down the order on paper, this is an interim step. The orders are entered into the Soarian Order Entry System and the paper order is discarded.
- All alerts must be resolved by the physician
- If the physician chooses not to stay on the phone while the order is entered into the Soarian Order Entry System and the orders trigger alerts, they will be called back by staff to resolve alerts; order will be read back to the provider after alert resolution
- If the provider chooses to give an order set as a telephone order, they must go through the order set with the clinician taking the order to determine order choices and resolve any alerts

Recommendation: Modify current Telephone Order policy to conform with the above principles.