

Implementing an Ambulatory Safety Net (ASN) for high-risk patients overdue for colorectal cancer screenings

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Background

- Colorectal cancer: Third-leading cause of cancer-related deaths in the U.S. for men; fourth-leading cause of cancer death for women.
- The COVID-19 pandemic halted most elective procedures resulting in many patients becoming overdue for surveillance colonoscopies.
- MIT Health needed a streamlined way to track colonoscopies. We wanted to follow patients from scheduling to report follow-up and needed to set up a field for “colonoscopy recall date” in our EMR.



Our Goal

Identify high-risk individuals and ensure 80% of eligible patients complete (or schedule) colonoscopy.



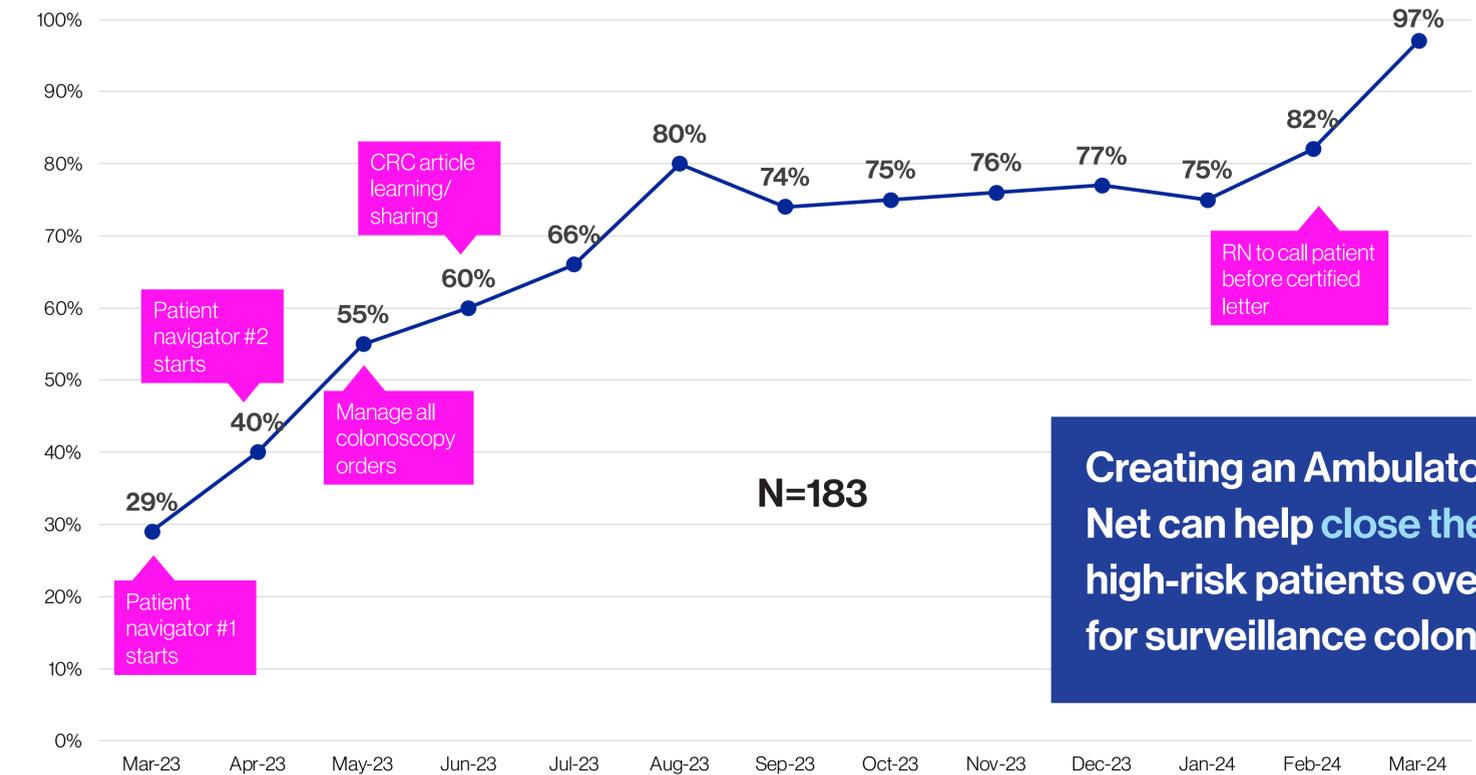
Ambulatory Safety Net Intervention

In October 2022, we implemented our **Ambulatory Safety Net (ASN)** program to close the loop on overdue surveillance colonoscopies for at-risk patients.

- Extensive chart reviews identified overdue patients and set recall recommendations in our EMR.
- Registry of eligible patients created using Smartsheet software
- Two dedicated patient navigators assigned to perform patient outreach to each patient in the registry.
- Designed and implemented an in-house process used to identify, reduce, and eliminate barriers to colonoscopy follow-up.

Our Results:

- **Scheduled or completed colonoscopies increased from 29% to 97%**
- **Successfully contacted 91% of high-risk patients**



Creating an Ambulatory Safety Net can help close the loop for high-risk patients overdue for surveillance colonoscopy.

Lessons Learned

- **Create a patient registry** that allows easy tracking and generates report metrics.
- **Automate** whenever possible.
- **Include an EMR field for colonoscopy recall date** — allows for quick identification of eligible patients.
- **Have a dedicated patient outreach team** to track colonoscopy reports and set recall dates — allows your primary care team to focus on other healthcare concerns.

Fast Facts

The top three barriers identified:

- Scheduling limitations
- Fear
- Transportation