Scenario 6: Orthopedic Surgery Clinic

You are an orthopedic surgery resident working in your outpatient clinic. It is Tuesday morning and you just finished seeing your first patient, a 75 year-old man for a post-hospital check after his bilateral knee replacement. You are a bit behind schedule as your first patient arrived late. He apologized, but indicated he had to wait in Radiology to get his x-rays taken for his appointment with you. You finish with him 30 minutes later than scheduled.

Your second patient is a 23 year-old college student who has a follow-up for a distal tibial-fibular ankle fracture. X-rays show the fracture is healing well, but the patient notes that the cast is tight and hurting her foot. You decide she needs a cast change, but the technician who does the casting is out sick today and there is no one to help you with this. You finish this visit in 40 minutes, but you were only scheduled for 20 minutes.

Your third patient is a new evaluation for left hip pain. He is a 67 year-old gentleman referred by a community physician for consideration of a possible total hip replacement. You obtain a history and do a physical and then go to review his x-rays, but you cannot find them. You ask the patient if he brought his outside x-rays with him. He replies that he arranged two weeks ago to have them sent to the medical center from the outside hospital where they were done. Frustrated, you send him to Radiology to get x-rays. Because of the time you spent looking for the x-rays you are now more than an hour behind in your schedule.

You have to reschedule your fourth patient, as you are called to the OR to assist with a trauma case that arrived from the Emergency Department. The patient is very upset. She states she has waited 2 months for the appointment and does not want to wait another 3 weeks until your next opening in clinic. You ask your secretary to add the patient in sooner and rush off to the OR.