

CASE STUDY: CLINICAL SPECIALTY PRACTICE PROCESS TRANSFORMATION

SITUATION ANALYSIS:

The practice manager and chief of the specialty section had determined that the clinic had very long door to door times; and patient satisfaction scores were suffering because of the long wait time. An assessment was conducted to identify strengths and weaknesses of their staff, processes and support systems. An output of the assessment prioritized key recommendations that needed to be implemented to support the transformation. A project plan was developed to execute and track the project efforts.

IMPROVEMENTS IDENTIFIED:

The assessment allowed the consultant to identify and prioritize the key projects that would be required to transform the processes. Change management would also be critical to ensure the transformation would be successful long term.

Key drivers of the overall project were as follows:

1. Gaps were evident throughout the specialty practice
 - Staff were not working at the top of their scope
 - Areas of work duplication between front and back office staff
 - Specialty testing was not scheduled before visit
 - Need for standardized scheduling practices and templates
 - Need for a standard flow process from beginning to end of visit

2. The processes required to support the increased efficiency within the clinic flow were not known or understood by staff or physicians
 - Specific job descriptions and functions (RN, MA, Specialty Testing) were siloed, and no defined handoffs
 - Patients were spending a large portion of their total visit time waiting
 - A communication plan between staff and patients surrounding wait times did not exist
 - Technology solutions were not being used to support the efficiency of the business operation
 - Scheduling templates were difficult to use and were not utilized to manage actual appointment times
 - Lack of formalized project management and supporting control mechanisms

OVERALL RESULTS:

With the help of our team the streamlined processes were deployed throughout the specialty practice with controls and key measures to insure sustainability. Technology solutions were implemented to assist employees in making more efficient scheduling decisions for the practice. As a result, the team was able to increase patient flow through the clinic, minimize staff touch time, and maximize physician time with the patient. Project outcome for the specialty clinic was an 8.6 % reduction in the actual total time for patients to move through the clinic and a 25% increase in patient satisfaction scores for time spent waiting in the clinic.