



Dean Health System Provides Advanced Access for Patients

Challenge: To identify and implement methods to improve appointment access for patients.

Target: Patients, physicians, nursing and medical staff

Solution: Dean began studying the concept of advanced access in 1998. Today their system-wide focus is on Internal Medicine and Family Practice with attention on OB-GYN and Pediatrics to follow.

At each site a team of Dean physicians, nurses and registration staff work together to develop ideas for simplifying scheduling protocols. Once the team has developed a more efficient practice model, the advanced access concept is introduced within departments at provider sites.

Each site develops its own plan of action, discusses the scheduling conflicts at their individual facility and brainstorms solutions for streamlining the scheduling process.

Outcome: Patients will have ready access to appointments when they want and need them. Some sites have already achieved great gains. Case in point: Dean's Oregon Clinic. Over a six month focused advanced access improvement period, Oregon Clinic watched appointment availability for a physical exam go from 25 days out to a same day visit. This means that patients calling for a routine exam now have the option of being seen the same day they call. Similar gains are delighting patients and their providers across the system.

Physicians and other medical staff have found their days to be less hectic and are able to spend quality time with each individual patient, as they aren't rushed through the day. The new scheduling processes developed for the advanced access program have been easy to implement and simplified scheduling protocol has eased the job of registration staff as well.