

THE VALUE OF TEAM-BASED CARE

Family medicine practices across the country are shifting to team-based care. Practices can choose from several models, or approaches, to more appropriately distribute workload, capitalize on strengths, and increase efficiency. Physician and staff benefits include reduced administrative burden, improved work-life balance, and a healthier practice culture. Physician well-being and satisfaction get a boost, and burnout decreases. Team-based care also yields valuable patient outcomes, such as higher satisfaction, improved quality of care, and increased access.



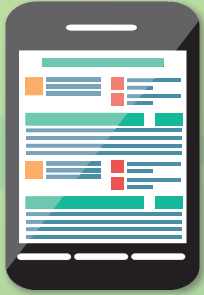
Hold a Huddle

All staff members gather as a team in the a.m. to review the schedule and discuss concerns. This builds camaraderie, trust, and support within the practice.



Set the Tone

The receptionist or front office staff member is the first person patients meet. He or she plays a part in setting the tone of the office and patient visits.



Collect Data

A clinical staff member, such as a nurse or medical assistant (MA), begins the patient visit in the exam room. He or she follows up with the patient on chronic conditions, previous treatment plans, or health maintenance; reconciles medicines; and collects vital signs and presenting symptoms.



Present Data

The nurse or MA reviews the patient's chart in front of the patient with the physician. This process provides the physician with the data he or she needs to perform the exam, and it allows the patient to verify whether the information is correct.



Perform and Document Exam

While the physician examines the patient, the same clinical staff member who started the visit stays in the room to document the exam in the electronic health record (EHR). This allows the physician to interact with the patient face-to-face and focus on diagnosis and treatment. Staff completes the chart in real time. This simple delegation of work increases efficiency and maximizes the contributions of each team member.

Implement Orders and Close the Visit

With input from the patient, the physician decides on a treatment plan and reviews it with the patient. Then, the clinical staff implements it. This may include ordering labs, completing a referral, providing patient education, or scheduling a follow-up appointment.



Keep in Touch

A care coordinator or health coach may join the team to develop an ongoing relationship with the patient and monitor his or her treatment plan. If the patient is referred to another specialist, such as a cardiologist, that physician will also become part of the patient's care team.



Come Together as a Team

Before going home, the team reconvenes to debrief on the day. It's important for the team to celebrate wins and accomplishments together, as well as to console and support each other on tough days.