

INTRODUCTION

Improving patient access to care is a priority of the St Michael's Hospital Academic Family Health Team (SMH AFHT). With over thirty two thousand patients that belong to one of five practice sites, coordination of patient care that is shared among the members of the health team is pivotal.

- Health disciplines, such as nurses, pharmacist, social work and dietitians play an integral role in providing care to patients.
- Understanding the scope of practice of each discipline is fundamental to effective integration and utilization of health disciplines within primary care teams.
- This poster presentation is intended to highlight two initiatives; centralized booking and integration of health disciplines within clinical teams as strategies to improve patient access to the health discipline team.

BACKGROUND

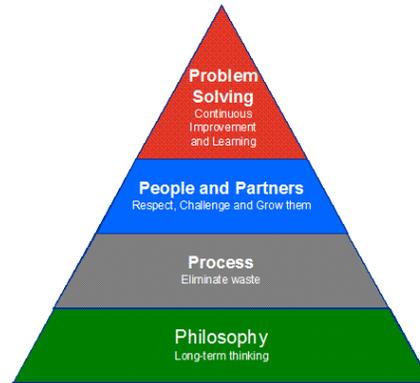
- Centralized booking in health care improves patient access to services.
- Currently, there exist lengthy patient wait times to be assessed by health disciplines of the SMH AFHT.
- Reduced visibility of health disciplines within the clinical setting is believed to have an effect on the degree health disciplines are utilized.

GOALS

- Reduce current wait times for service by the health discipline team members (RNS, pharmacist, dietitians, social work, diabetes team).
- Evaluate the current referral service and streamline.
- Integrate health disciplines within the clinics to increase utilization of their service by providers and patients.
- Educate providers and others about health discipline roles.

UNDERSTANDING WORK PROCESS

- Process mapping was used to understand the current referral process to the health discipline services.
- Interviews conducted to determine perceptions about health discipline underutilization.



FINDINGS

- Practitioners engage in many administrative tasks related to the processing of patient referrals.
- Increased patient wait times for health disciplines is related to the current referral process and not the availability of patient appointments.
- Geographical location of health disciplines limits opportunities for direct patient contact within the clinical setting.
- Poor utilization of health disciplines shown by high availability of patient appointments.
- Perceived provider lack of understanding and clarity of discipline roles cited as a barrier to effective integration within clinical teams.
- Perceived patient lack of awareness of health discipline roles.

IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

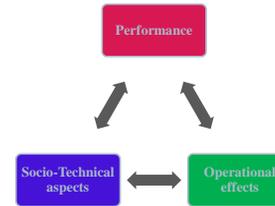


Figure 3. Summary of Lean Outcomes

- Lean principles applied to the patient booking system to streamline the referral process.
- Centralized booking process implemented to remove administrative duties from the health disciplines role.
- Improve provider access to health discipline services by permitting the providers and others to schedule patients directly into the health discipline's schedule.
- Health disciplines to present to providers and other team members about their role and responsibilities.
- Integration of health discipline offices within clinic setting to facilitate interdisciplinary collaboration and visibility.



PRELIMINARY OUTCOMES

- Centralized booking has significantly reduced patient wait times for appointments with the health disciplines (Same day appointments now versus 1-2 weeks wait time).
- The health discipline report better communication and understanding of health discipline role amongst the different professional groups.
- Providers report increased utilization of health disciplines within the clinical setting post relocation of team member offices within the clinical setting.
- Increased interdisciplinary collaboration.

NEXT STEPS

- Ongoing evaluation of the referral process to health disciplines.
- Evaluate the impact of changes (centralized booking and integration within clinical teams) on health discipline workload.
- Develop strategies for increasing patient awareness about health discipline roles.

REFERENCES

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Quality Strategic Framework. (October, 2013). St. Michael's Hospital (090).

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