

Patient and Provider Perspectives on the Reasons for No-Shows and Potential Interventions to Reduce Them

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Background

Patient no-shows, can be defined “as patients who fail to attend their scheduled clinic appointments”. Nationwide, no-show rates are at a staggering 18.8%. At Capitol Hill clinic, a federally qualified health center, the no-show rates are currently at 13%. This phenomenon is particularly concerning as it negatively impacts delivery of care, cost of care and clinical resources. Current interventions being used to reduce no-shows at Capitol Hill include calling patients 24 hours before an appointment and sending reminder letters. Despite current interventions, Capitol Hill Clinic providers still face difficulties in reducing no-shows.

Objectives

This quality improvement research seeks to 1) elucidate the causes of no-shows at Capitol Hill Clinic and 2) find meaningful interventions to reduce no-show rates.

Methods

Interviews, statistical analysis and a literature review were used to conduct this Quality Improvement (Q.I) study. Interviews were conducted with clinical staff and patients to identify reasons for no-shows and find meaningful interventions to reduce no-shows. Retrospective EHR review of no-show rates for the past three months was analyzed using Excel. A literature review was conducted to identify interventions that have reduced no-show rates at other clinics.

Results

Qualitative analysis of healthcare workers and patient responses showed the most common reasons for no-shows to be forgetfulness, conflicting schedules and problems with transportation. The most suggested interventions for reducing no-shows included adopting a robust reminder system such as text messaging, a modified open-access system, and the provision of transportation, to and from the clinic. Statistical analysis of existing data showed that pre-booked appointments accounts for 73% of no-shows in the clinic.

Conclusions

Pre-booked appointments and a lack of a robust reminder system seem to be the major causes of no-shows at Capitol Hill Clinic. Hence a text-messaging system and a modified scheduling system, which would allow more same-day booking, would be imperative in reducing the no-show rates at Capitol Hill PCHC.