

Best Practices for Improving Patient Access

1. Telemedicine

Most patients have widely accepted telehealth services. 74% of Americans are willing to use telemedicine services, and more than 76% are more comfortable with access to care at home (AHA research). Providers can see twice as many patients through telemedicine when compared to traditional in-person visits.

2. Patients can get access to answers and information via telephone and email

Patients require answers to simple questions, and many times they don't require in-office visits.

3. Health needs can be met by care team members (i.e., nurses, MAs, midlevel providers)

Patient questions can be answered by team members and don't need to be answered by the physician.

4. Utilize high-risk case management teams to help manage complex patients

Regal/Lakeside/ADOC provides high-risk case management for diabetes, COPD, CHF, cancer, and many other programs.

5. Increase percentage of same-day appointments

This type of scheduling gets patients seen quicker, improves patient satisfaction, brings new patients to physician practices, reduces no-shows, and reverses lost reimbursement. Some practices use open access models with very few scheduled visits and patients call the day an appointment is needed.

6. Routine follow-ups over telephone/telemedicine

Many times, routine follow-up visits do not require in-office consultations. Use telephone contact, initiated either by the clinic or the patient, to check up on a patient's status instead of an appointment. Have a nurse evaluate the member over the phone to see if a follow-up appointment is warranted. Use provider discretion to increase return appointment intervals.