

Health West Aberdeen Clinic



Health West, Inc. is a community health center in southeastern Idaho, with six separate clinic locations within a 50-mile radius

Our Patients:

- All ages welcome
- Bilingual care provided (English, Spanish)
- Accept cash pay, non-insured, Medicaid, Medicare, and insured individuals
- Health West offers a discounted fee schedule to those who qualify based on a sliding scale
- Majority of patients at Health West live below 200% of the Federal Poverty Level

SNMHI Team: EVERYONE

(Administrative support staff, nursing staff, primary care providers, mental health providers, health educators, pharmacists, care manager, and volunteers)

WHY TEAM-BASED CARE?

- Health West wanted to be more efficient in providing appropriate healthcare to all new and existing patients.
- The main goal was to evenly distribute the daily clinic workload across all Health West employees, to maximize the use of everyone's skill level to their fullest potential.

CHANGES

Change 1: Improve Communication

It was necessary to break down positional barriers to open up the environment for more effective communication (i.e., receptionists communicating with medical providers directly about daily patient scheduling). Health West hoped to improve communication, at both the clinic and organizational levels.

The Plan of Action:

- Implement "huddles"
 - Most effective when they are simple and quick
- Redefine roles and expectations for all team members to level the playing field
- Provide a descriptive, quarterly newsletter to be handed out with payroll to all Health West employees and board members
- Distribute staff satisfaction surveys as a method of measuring communication effectiveness
- Overhaul our ancient Policy & Procedure Manual
 - Streamlined, standardized working practices helped

By making these changes, Health West has been able to achieve an increased level of cohesiveness across the board and has more informed employees in general.

Change 2: Standardize Clinical Operations

With six clinic locations and differing populations at each site, Health West was unable to maintain similar clinical operations (i.e., opposing patient check-in strategies, enforcing money collection varied, different documentation at front desk and within EMR, etc.).

Health West hoped to streamline clinical methods to eliminate confusion amongst patients and employees, and to reduce billing and documentation errors.

The Plan of Action:

- Each clinic is responsible to hold monthly staff meetings to keep every one updated with new operative modifications
- Created a "Receptionist Manual" for all front desk staff and managers
- Created a "Chronic Care and Health Maintenance Guidelines" manual to be given to all nursing staff

Change is not easy and it is a continual work in progress, yet the benefits are valuable for both patients and Health West as an organization. Maintaining consistency across clinics has helped the organization grow stronger as a team.

"Just keep swimming!"

Change 3: Host All-Staff Meetings

According to recent staff satisfaction surveys, there were a number of Health West employees who felt there was a lack of communication between staff, providers, billing, and administration. It was a need that required immediate attention!

The goal was to provide a welcoming environment for all employees to come together as one team, to meet each other in person, for training, and to improve communication within Health West.

The Plan of Action:

- Set a date, time, and location for quarterly meetings
- Choose the most important topics to be covered during the session; keep it brief, simple, and entertaining
- Follow up with another staff satisfaction survey to see if any improvements have been made

Employees now look forward to the all-staff meetings. They are effective in uniting Health West as a team.

All-staff meetings are worth trying if your organization can afford the time. Holding a training for a specific topic, such as "Violence in the Workplace," can be beneficial. A quarterly meeting has worked well for our scheduling and planning.

Staff Survey Feedback:

- "The all-staff meetings give us a common goal to work on."
- "Fantastic seeing everybody in one spot, exchanging information. Role plays were great. Huddles are a fabulous idea...keep up the good communication component."
- "I felt like we were finally a team! I like the idea of sharing ideas and helping each other out."
- "I liked the all-staff meeting. We were able to share ideas. I felt like more of a team member and I feel the communication is much better as a group."



PATIENT IMPACT

"With team-based care, we can better anticipate our patients' needs when it comes to medication refills, scheduling lab work, and setting up for an office visit, etc. Plus, our patients' needs are better served. I also feel that I can work more comfortably with my provider."—LPN

"Team-based care helps our patients by giving them a support group and the exceptional care they need. They are always followed up with and have a medical team they can count on to help with their needs."— Receptionist

PROVIDER / STAFF IMPACT

"The very best parts of the Patient-centered Medical Home are that the patient gets better, more effective care than ever before, and the provider—because everyone is working as a team—can deliver this care with even less effort than before. More for less—you can't beat that!"—Medical Director

"As a medical provider, PCMH allows me to provide my patients higher quality, more complete care."

A specific example: 56-year-old diabetic female suffering from obesity and depression. She had a poor self image and lacked motivation to make changes. As a primary care provider I reviewed with her all aspects of her current situation including her current lab work, medications, goals, feelings towards her current health, and more. Over the next two months, and with a little encouragement, she was able to do the following:

- Meet with our health educator and mental health counselor
- Adjust to a better medication regimen
- Begin a regular exercise program and improve her diet, helping her shed 6 pounds, have more energy throughout the day, have longer, more restful sleep, and improve her mood
- Move forward in her life with help of the counselor

As she continues on her current path, I fully suspect to see a different woman within the short span of a year. I am grateful to have the resources provided by PCMH and Team-Based Care."—Physician's Assistant



Safety Net Medical Home Initiative



MacColl Institute at
Group Health Cooperative