

Mid Upper Cape CHC



Located in the middle of Cape Cod, Mid Upper Cape Community Health Center in Hyannis serves over 7,000 unique patients offering comprehensive medical and dental primary care. Most of our patients are low-income and underinsured; and 40% are immigrants from Brazil – many Portuguese-speaking with limited English. We have seven primary care providers and four dentists with another 15 medical and dental support staff.

We have been paperless and using NextGen since December 2007. The exception was our referral process which just went electronic in late 2010.

“So much quicker, more efficient. Smooth from beginning to end. All notes are online. For example, a patient with a new cancer diagnosis needed a referral to an oncology specialist, MRI, and CT. Preauthorization was needed for everything: CPT, ICD, dates of onset, all the information was right there on the screen or in the note.” —Referral Coordinator

CHANGES

In October 2010, we decided to implement online referrals. We trained our providers in one week, and we confiscated the old paper forms.

The change basically required a thorough mapping of the current workflow process, and linking of specialist data files. We received help from our IT and EMR departments and the transition was smooth. Providers accepted the change – it made sense to them. Patients have commented they like it and have noticed the quicker turnaround for referral processing.

Now, with no lost pages, faxes, and notes, the turnaround time is down. The exception is urgent referrals which are always processed faster, or within one day if needed. We can now see the status of all referrals: those ordered, scheduled, completed, and report received. There is still a problem getting the specialists’ results/reports entered into the system as that is not automated and must be still be done manually.

We recommend to others who want to do this to think through the workflow process, and then just do it!

PATIENT IMPACT

“This might not sound exciting, but the ability to easily review the status of the referral is exciting. The patient is in the room, asks me about the cardiology referral, I look it up within the EMR and can tell the patient the paperwork was sent last week so the patient should be hearing from them soon.” —Medical Director

“There is an increased organization level surrounding referrals due to the fact that everything is recorded in the EMR. Providers can see status at a glance. It eliminated information being in two or three different places. No more forms. Providers absolutely love it. We can also prioritize urgent referrals.” —Registered Nurse

Safety Net Medical Home Initiative



MacColl Institute at
Group Health Cooperative