

PARTNERING WITH OUR PATIENTS...

for better health & primary care

St. Luke's Eastern Oregon Medical Associates (EOMA)

is a very rural frontier clinic in Baker City, Oregon. Prior to this project, they had tried several different ways to engage their patients, but they had limited improvement in objective measures of improved patient outcomes and HEDIS measures. As a result, they had no ongoing, formal systematic engagement in place.

What was the issue?

In 2013, EOMA learned through patient questionnaires that patients were experiencing significant delays in refills as well as errors in prescriptions. Patients would often have to wait long periods of time and occasionally be forced to go without much needed medications.

How did they engage their patients?

Through involvement with local community leader and patients they decided to develop a working group to try to streamline and improve the prescription refill process. The group involved patients, staff and physicians who met monthly to tackle the problem. They began by mapping out the refill process and discovered several flaws. As a group they reworked and streamlined the entire medication refill process so that it was easier, faster and safer for patients, staff and doctors.

What was the result?

Ultimately this process was so successful that the practice wants to "involve patients top to bottom in the entire organization." They are currently work on phase 2 of this patient group with the aim of "help patients get the most out of their health care." They have also developed a bi-monthly newsletter titled *Partners in Health*, targeting clinic happenings that are of interest specifically to patients, and have begun work on other quality improvement tasks.

PRACTICE PROFILE

Name: St. Luke's Eastern Oregon Medical Associates

Practice type: Employed frontier rural health clinic

PCMH recognition: Tier 3 PCMH

Location: Baker City, Oregon

Primary Care Provider

Staffing: 10 providers

Patient visits/year: 28,200

Patient demographics:

Medicare 38%

Medicaid 35%

Commercial insurance 21%

Other/self-pay: 6%

Level of patient

engagement: Organizational design



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What advice do they have for others?

One important lesson that this practice learned is that work groups that involve patients need to have a clear goal, ground rules, and objective for each meeting. The first few meetings were unproductive due to discourse breaking down into “complaining sessions” without much forward progress on the task at hand. However, once one or two key individuals took leadership and set clear ground rules and objective for each meeting, productive conversation and results quickly followed. Furthermore, they found that coordinating schedules well in advance and ensuring that one or two key leaders were present at each meeting was critical to forward progress.

How can I learn more?

Do participating practices want others to contact them with questions? Other resources we’d like to add?

Learn more about Eastern Oregon Medical Associates at: <https://www.stlukesonline.org/communities-and-locations/facilities/clinics/st-lukes-clinic--eastern-oregon-medical-associates>

For additional resources on how to involve patients as advisors in your practice, visit: <http://cepc.ucsf.edu/patients-transformation-partners>

Other resources:

Institute for Patient and Family Centered Care: <http://www.ipfcc.org/>

Thanks for the case study to...

Dr. Jon Shott, former partner of EOMA



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