Increasing Access to Primary Care by Huddling

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Disclosures

- Denise M. Willard, DNP, FNP-C
- Employer: Veterans Health Administration,
  - Palo Alto Health Care System
- No Sponsors, No financial support
Learning Objectives

- Examine the role of huddling in primary care.
- Discuss the use of performance based outcomes measures.
- Recognize the ways structured huddling can increase team efficiency.
Access Delays in the Healthcare system

- Increase Costs
- Decrease patient satisfaction
- Negatively impact health outcomes
Mismatch between supply & demand
Alternative Methods of Care Delivery

- Telephone appointments & secure messaging
- Interdisciplinary focused visits
- Nurse clinics
- Advance review of appointments
Communication & Teamwork are key to timely access.

- 17% of a provider’s time is spent on preventive care
- 37% spent on chronic care & patient education
- Matching the clinical need to the appropriate care delivery method are key.
Huddles

Benefits

↑ Patient safety, improves team efficiency and communication
→ Shifts non-provider tasks to other team members (care coordination)
↑ Patient access and expands provider capacity
The project sought to answer the following questions:

- Identify the impact of huddle coaching on huddle frequency.

- Evaluate the effect of huddling on completion of pre-visit tasks.

- Exam the effect of huddling on scheduled nurse visits.
Huddle intervention

Setting
- 2-primary care clinics located in the SW

Sample
- 4-Primary care teams

Framework
- PDSA Model

Intervention
- 8 weeks huddle coaching program
Performance Based Outcome Measures

- MSA reminder calls
- Nurse previsit telephone notes
- Scheduled Nurse appointments
- Huddle checklists
- 959 patient encounters reviewed
- Dependent sample t-test used to measure the affect of huddling on variables.
- Pearson product-moment correlation coefficient use to determine the relationship between MA & NS.
Research Question 1.
What impact does huddle coaching have on team huddle frequency?

Finding:
- Significant increase in group huddle frequency \((p = .004)\)

Research Question 2.
What effect does huddling have on completion of previsit activities?

Findings:
- No Significance
Research Question 3.
What effect did huddling have on the use of nurse appointments?

Findings: No Significance
- 88% of 624 possible nurse appointments remained unscheduled.

Research Question 4.
What effect did missed appointment reminder calls have on the patient no-show rate?

Finding: Significant
Huddle coaching is an effective method to increase team huddling rates.

Performance based-outcomes are an effective way to measure the contributions of interdisciplinary team members.

Effective utilization of nurse appointments could shift care away from the provider.

Appointment reminder calls matter.