

Daily Huddles and Weekly Team Meetings

Huddles

To conduct a "huddle," the care team assembles at a predetermined time each day to look ahead on the schedule and anticipate the needs of the patients coming to the clinic that day.

For example, a patient may need a potassium test before he or she meets with the physician. Instead of waiting until the patient is in the exam room with the physician, the staff can send the patient to the lab immediately after checking in at the clinic. Then the clinic staff can adjust the schedule because they know the patient won't be using the original appointment slot, but will need a slot 30 to 45 minutes later after the test is conducted.

Start huddles with a small bit of work and grow the work as the team gains proficiency. For example, in their huddles, teams can discuss what patients on the schedule are unlikely to show up for their appointments (because they are in the hospital, they called to cancel, or were seen just last week), what equipment will be needed in the room, and what additional services the care team can provide for the patient at today's appointment to make a re-visit less likely. Anticipate needs of patients with chronic conditions (DM, HTN, HF) and self-management support approach for today's visit to help patients manage their health (e.g. more RN time).

Lessons learned from the huddles are recorded and reviewed at weekly team meetings.

Weekly team meetings review lessons from huddles.

The care team also needs concentrated time together to plan their roles and responsibilities, as well as to discuss opportunities for improvement in their work. Planned team meetings, scheduled weekly are the most effective tool for working on improvement aims and for using panel metrics to plan population health management activity.