

## **Innovations to Transform Care Delivery, Access, Quality, and Experience**

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**Background & Objective:** Healthcare organizations and leaders are increasingly focused on their digital front door to create an accessible, convenient omnichannel customer experience and drive quality outcomes. Socioeconomic and sociodemographic factors pose barriers that affect access to care for underserved populations. With a payor mix of 65% of our patients enrolled in Medicaid plans, our Health System is balancing leveraging technology to optimize the patient experience with barriers to access care including digital access and/or literacy, health literacy, and language barriers. The objective of this program is to deliver an exceptional patient and family experience with a lens on health equity and mitigating barriers to digital and in-person healthcare. Our goals are to improve new patient access, no-show rates, and overall patient experience.

**Planning Methods:** Leveraging Lean Six Sigma principles, identified key strategies to enhance access, including:

- Develop a user-friendly digital front door, including a robust patient portal, seamless virtual care platform, pre-visit registration tool, and detailed appointment reminders
- Improve scheduling and coordination through a centralized referrals and authorization unit, and ability to book an appointment online
- Proactively identify social and economic drivers affecting the child and family's wellbeing through a pre-visit screening survey
- Offer multi-lingual methods of communication via the patient portal, appointment reminders, telehealth platform, and website
- Assess physical and virtual space for opportunities to meet patients and families where they are
- Equip clinicians and staff with tools and resources to support patients/families through continual education

**Implementation methods:** A multi-pronged strategy was launched in January 2023, which consisted of data collection and informed improvement efforts running in parallel, all supported with continual education. Assessing our pre-visit registration tool, we found an opportunity to administer a Social Drivers of Health screener that would integrate with the electronic health record (EHR) and use the results to focus community support efforts. To support patients and families without technology access, we created a process to provide qualifying families a smart phone with relevant applications preloaded. Considering that 40% of the Health System's population is Spanish speaking, we implemented Spanish pre-visit communications, Spanish instances of our patient portal, online scheduling experience, and website. We also ensured that the job description for scheduling require the ability to speak proficiently in English and Spanish. Accounting for staff feedback on workload in the office, a centralized insurance verification, referrals and authorization team was developed to work all upcoming visits. Freeing up work from the office allows staff time to contact patients and families and remind them of their upcoming appointment and to bring in any additional information to their visit.

**Results: (e.g., cost savings, increased productivity, improved quality of care)**

- An SDOH screener administered to 8,482 unique patients identified 39% of patients screening positive for one of the main domains, including Food, Housing, Nutrition, Resources, Transportation, and/or Utility Insecurities between November 2023 – February 2024.
- 16% growth (10,612) in new patients seen year over year, with timely access provided as 50.6% of new patients seen within 7 days in 2023, compared to 46.9% in 2021
- No Show rates dropped from 18.4% in 2021, to 16% in 2023
- Optimized the proprietary telehealth platform with new features and capabilities, streamlined workflows and integrated with the EHR, resulting in utilization by 25 pediatric specialties and 99.81% adoption to one solution
- Over 110,000 virtual visits were completed (Jan 2020 – Dec 2023), with sustained adoption across all subspecialties post the pandemic, comprising 9% of medical practice visits in 2023
- "Likelihood to recommend the practice" on telehealth patient satisfaction survey score increased from 83.86% to 88.61% between 2022 to 2023 and 6 of 7 questions scored higher for telehealth, compared to in-person
- Estimated annual savings of \$354K, 2,200 miles and 15K hours, for patients/families, through use of telehealth