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WAYS Practices Have Changed Workflow during COVID-19

Our practices have faced many challenges and changes over the past few months, but through resiliency and innovation, they have found a way to thrive in unprecedented times. How did they do it? Stories were collected from May 1 - June 22, 2020.

"We have fully embraced Telehealth in primary care and it is so beneficial for my mental and behavioral health patients and medication follow-ups. It has reduced workload for the front and back."

1



Transitioning to Telehealth

Practices have begun relying on telemedicine (both telephone and video visits) for most of their patient interaction to minimize exposure of both staff and patients. For many, this transition has been complicated, but has proven extremely beneficial.

2



Increasing Patient Access

Practices have put in great efforts to serve patients through outreach and extended services. These outreach efforts are extending beyond care to education and wellbeing.

"Started aggressive educational outreach to all our patients to help them understand both the pandemic and their individual risks, personalized risk-reduction strategies."

"We don PPE in one area, go through a plastic magnetic door, see our patients, exit to the porch outside and doff all PPE, we re-enter a separate door that is back to the "clean" side, we have bought \$7000 worth of air purifiers, changed all cleaning protocols, we have built a respiratory shed in the back with air conditioning."

3



Increasing Use of PPE

Providers have implemented the use of masks, face shields, gloves, and other forms of PPE in most of their daily practices to avoid contracting the virus and spreading it to others.

4



Maintaining Social Distancing

Practices are rearranging their clinic spaces, increasing cleaning frequency, and have moved to curbside appointments to maintain proper social distancing guidelines, and to keep potentially sick patients out of the physical office space.

"Patients are immediately escorted to an exam room, no patients are allowed to stand at front office or sit in the waiting room. Each room is thoroughly cleaned before another patient is allowed in the room, after clinic we turn on UV light to help with sanitation."

"We are screening patients before they come in, again at the front desk and checking temps, if they have a temp or test positive we have an open air shed that we will see people in, if negative then they're taken back to the room."

5



Extra Screening Measures

Before being seen, many patients are assessed for COVID-19 symptoms and exposure in order to minimize the risk of infection. If symptoms appear, the visit is usually switched to telehealth.

6



Adjusting Clinic Traffic Patterns

Clinics have adjusted the way that patients and staff move/occupy facilities in order to minimize the spread of the virus.

"Lobby greeters, no lobby furniture, curbside testing, designated "sick" rooms, triage call center (MAs answer phones not receptionists), using Robotic remote presence device to scribe patient visits."

7



Emphasizing Staff Support & Wellbeing

Healthcare workers are on the frontlines of the pandemic, working under high amounts of stress both at work and at home. Practices are recognizing this and making efforts to support their staff in any way necessary and reminding them of the importance of mental health and avoiding burnout.

8



Making Scheduling Changes

Practices have had to adjust the way that patients are scheduled to maintain patient volume and address the needs of patients with ailments outside of COVID-19, as well as treat patients who are displaying symptoms of the virus.

"Morning well care, afternoon sick care."

"Scheduling every other patient as telemedicine so there's only one patient in office at a time."

Other Stories

"We have separated our clinic into a well side and a sick side with separate entrances and exits. We are keeping all of our well rooms clean and free from sick patients."

"We are focusing more time and efforts on online resources for the community, including video updates by our providers on our website and social media, as well as written updates posted to highaltitudehealth.com, all of which continue to receive a positive response."

"We are utilizing a pharmacy runner system where cars park and a pharmacy staff member comes to them to get their information and then brings meds out to them; this minimizes people inside the building specific to pharmacy."

*Quotes were taken directly from survey responses but were edited for clarity.

