

Bringing It All Together In the Small Office Setting

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Starting before we opened our office, we created a mission statement. One of the tenets of our mission statement is to offer the best care available in a timely manner. To accomplish this we have set up systems in our office and recently purchased an EMR.

The main system we rely upon to maintain good service regarding availability and access is Open Access scheduling. An off-shoot of Open Access scheduling is that we do not have to sign out our call on the weekends and holidays. We also use RelayHealth as another avenue of access.

We have tried to streamline filling prescriptions as well. New prescriptions are faxed in at the point of care through our EMR and we offer generic medications through Allscripts. These two systems reduce patient waiting time at their pharmacy.

We are also implementing systems that improve the quality of care we deliver. Examples include our Diabetes Registry (CAFP Diabetes Collaborative) and Group Visits. We have done Group Visits for smoking cessation for many years and plan on offering such visits for Diabetes in the near future.

Our next endeavor will be to introduce a Portal that directly interfaces with our EMR. Features include patient access to areas of their chart, email access to staff and physician, and incoming and outgoing webvisits.

If we were to start from scratch again, I don't think we would do anything differently. We would still use a mission statement as well as the systems approach. However, I think we would set up formal benchmarks including milestone measuring. We would also have more frequent meetings around those.

I have spoken with many physicians about the challenges around access and quality of care. The systems we have in place are actually quite easy to implement and maintain. I can compare what life was like before our systems approach as I was in a group practice of 4 physicians. Our current setting is without a doubt more rewarding from a fiscal and quality of life/job satisfaction perspective.