

FOR PATIENT CENTERED PRIMARY CARE...

Partner With Your Patients

DTC Family Health (formerly DTC Family Health and Walk-in) has been serving Greenwood Village, Colorado for over 20 years. They began taking their first steps toward patient engagement around 5 years ago, with the inception of their Patient and Family Advisory Council as a result of their work on the Comprehensive Primary Care Initiative (CPCI), a four year multi-payer initiative sponsored by the Center for Medicare and Medicaid Services designed to strengthen primary care.

What was the issue?

Located in the tech center of South Denver, this practice has been experiencing rapid growth because of the job influx in the area. Further compounding this issue was that as a walk-in center, anybody, whether they were a member of the clinic or not, would be able to walk in and receive services on the same day. A sharp increase in new patients who were not establishing care at the practice meant that there were fewer slots for members who are actually part of the practice. DTC Family Health had continued to hire providers to attempt to meet the rising demand, but were still struggling with capacity.

How did they engage their patients?

The Patient and Family Advisory Council (PFAC), which consists of 20 patient members randomly selected from 1000 patients, meets quarterly. Meetings are facilitated by the office manager and serve as a formal venue for patients to voice their concerns and give feedback about how the practice is doing.

Some members of the PFAC are longstanding patients at the clinic, having been patients there for 20 years. As the practice grew, patients were vocal about their concerns regarding access and raised awareness of the ongoing issues to staff.

PRACTICE PROFILE

Name: DTC Family Health
Practice type: Small to mid-sized group in suburban Denver
PCMH recognition: PCMH Level 3, Track 2 for CPC+
Location: Greenwood Village, CO
Primary Care Provider Staffing: 7 Providers, 3 physicians
Patient visits/year: ~14,000
Patient demographics:
90% Commercial insurance
6-7% Medicare
1-2% Medicaid
1-2% Uninsured
Level of patient engagement: Organizational Design
Notable highlight: Patient-driven branding



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What was the result?

Hearing the frustration of the patients about the issues regarding access through stories shared at PFAC meetings, DTC Family Health ultimately decided to remove the “Walk-in” from their name off social media and their website. This was a difficult decision for the practice to make; for over 20 years, whenever somebody within the community woke up sick, they knew they would be able to walk into the clinic and be seen. To change this meant to change the branding of the clinic and represented a move to a commitment to their empaneled patients rather than a focus on being a walk in site.

“The Council was a driver in making this decision,” says Dr. Tim Dudley, Medical Director at DTC Family Health. “They tell their stories....and are a ‘soundboard’ for us.” This change reflects the willingness of the clinic to take into consideration the dynamic needs of the population that they serve.

What advice do they have for others?

This practice strongly believes that medicine is a team-based sport that requires involvement from staff at all levels, and most importantly, the patient.

“Some people are afraid that [engaging patients] will turn into a ‘gripe’ session,” explains Dudley.

This does not seem to be the case for this practice. When asked about his experience in engaging with patients, Dudley explains, “We’ve found that people are thoughtful and want to help.”

How can I learn more?

Visit the DTC Family Health website at <https://www.dtcfamilyhealth.com/>

For additional resources on how to involve patients as advisors in your practice, visit: <http://cepc.ucsf.edu/patients-transformation-partners>

Other resources:

Institute for Patient and Family Centered Care: <http://www.ipfcc.org/>

Thanks for the case study to...

Dr. Tim Dudley, Medical Director at DTC Family Health



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