

# FOR PATIENT CENTERED PRIMARY CARE...

## Partner With Your Patients

In rural Austin, Indiana, Dr. Will Cooke, Medical Director of **Foundations Family Clinic**, and his team of 3 clinicians are responsible for the health of its 4,300 residents. Due to limited access to specialty care, Cooke and his team provide an impressive array of services such as HIV, Hepatitis C, and behavioral health. To provide these services effectively, his practice has numerous partnerships with local and state-wide programs as well as within the community.

### What was the issue?

The opioid epidemic, along with the 2015 HIV outbreak, hit this rural community hard. When opiate prescribing guidelines became more stringent, the question of how to adequately address and treat pain was made apparent.

### How did they engage their patients?

Knowing that patients who are prescribed opioids are often those who may be unable to get to the clinic or shy away from care in the medical setting, Cooke and his team went out into the community to hear from patients living that lifestyle.

"We go out and find them - we give them rides, food, toboggans, scarves," Cooke explains. "[They] share what's going on in their lives and we develop that relationship. We are part of the community."

This mindset is evident in their building infrastructure. In partnership with the AIDS Health Care Foundation, they were able to create a separate entrance and window in their clinic for the patient advocacy center, where patients are able to come and provide feedback, seek resources, or even hang out. Cooke takes engagement one step further, utilizing social media as a venue for patients to voice their concerns. "Patients contact me directly through Facebook," he adds. "I hear things I wouldn't necessarily hear otherwise." He learned that patients were aware of the opioid crisis but had serious concerns about how their pain would be treated.

### PRACTICE PROFILE

**Name:** Foundations Family Clinic

**Practice type:** Rural health clinic, National Health Service Corp Site

**PCMH recognition:** None

**Location:** Austin, Indiana

**Primary Care Provider**

**Staffing:** 1 MD, 2 NPs, 1 PA

**Patient visits/year:** 16,000

**Patient demographics:** 66% Medicaid, 19% Medicare, 15% Private Pay (sliding fee schedule)

**Level of patient engagement:** Organizational design

**Notable highlight:** Community outreach, chronic pain management

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## What was the result?

In response to patients' concerns and needs regarding pain treatment without the use of opiates, Cooke and his colleagues created the rheumatology/joint clinic to deliver non-narcotic pain management services.

Originally, they tried partnering with a chiropractor, but ran into issues with insurance reimbursements. Later, a physical therapist had been recruited, but the lack of space made the therapy difficult. Their next plan? A physician specifically trained in sports medicine will be joining their team to perform joint injections.

The joint clinic has been continuously evolving, depending on what is accessible and what works for the patients. One thing that hasn't changed, however, is the overarching goal of integrating physical medicine into the clinic as a means to treat pain for the patients.

## What advice do they have for others?

"You need to be a part of the community," Cooke says. "[You] can't just open...an office in one part

of town and think you're doing community care. If you want to be community oriented, you have to be out in the community."

This advice is one that can be seen through how this team operates within the community; they attend community events, provide a weekly dinner, meet with superintendents, hold events at schools, and community nurses go out every day to meet with patients in their neighborhood.

"Every patient has a story that they're living within, and our community also has a shared narrative...Listen to what that narrative means...and be a part of that collective community story."

## How can I learn more?

Visit their website:

<http://wwwFOUNDATIONSfamilymedicine.com/>

## Thanks for the case study to...

Dr. Will Cooke, Medical Director, Foundations Family Medicine



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