

Quick Care for Patients is Goal of OSF Initiative

Care Transformation adopts team approach to getting patients what they need

It's a challenge for both patients and their providers - finding time to address a person's medical needs and wants to the betterment and satisfaction of both.

OSF HealthCare believes it has found a solution. OSF Innovation collaborated with OSF HealthCare Medical Group and front-line clinicians to launch Care Transformation, an initiative to redesign the primary care clinic model to address population health and value-based health care delivery. The goals of the project were to expand access, improve the patient experience, lower costs and create a better workplace environment.

OSF HealthCare, and specifically OSF Medical Group, believe it has found a solution in what is called the Care Transformation initiative. Working as a team, with well-defined protocols, physicians, nurses, nurse practitioners medical assistants, care managers - even social workers - determine the best way to meet the health care wishes and necessities of all patients being seen on any particular day.

The process is working for Susan Schmitz, of Rockford, who had a concern about her blood pressure she wanted answers to, but didn't feel she needed to make an appointment with her doctor.

"Met with Tina and she was awesome," says Susan Schmitz, an OSF Medical Group patient. "So, she really put me at ease. She spent time with me. She explained things. We talked about general medical concerns. And it was a very positive experience."

The Tina to whom Susan referred is Tina Pumilia, an OSF Registered Nurse, who works and consults with several providers within the Care Transformation model at an OSF Medical Group office in Rockford. She says this approach allows patients to be seen quicker in a familiar medical setting and provides her and the patient more time together.

"If they have more questions that come up, than just what they're scheduled for, you know, I have the opportunity to discuss that with them," says Tina Pumilia, a registered nurse with OSF HealthCare Medical Group, "I do get to go in-depth with them. So, sometime they're more comfortable saying things to me that they may not be, but it's an important part of their health care. So, that does get relayed, obviously, to the doctor or the provider."

Pumilia finds the patient is more at ease and more readily will speak about problems or barriers with their medical needs and treatment. Care Transformation also keeps the patient on track with scheduled tests, screenings and preventative measures, like flu shots - all without having to wait to directly see their personal physician.

"It's beyond my expectations," says Dr. Michael Maloney, Internal Medicine physician with OSF HealthCare Medical Group. "She's able to see patients that need to be seen, practice within her scope. She can then get patients to me that maybe are out of her scope and do that quickly. So, we've improved access. But, the other thing is we're also starting to be able to reach out and touch patients that have not been in the system and that should be."

Dr. Maloney's Medical Group office was a pilot site for the Care Transformation initiative, which began in 2015. He says in addition to the benefits the model provides those seeking immediate care, it also gives him the time to address the needs of more complex patients.

"So, you've got to focus on the patient's agenda, but there's also this very important agenda and some of that is taken off my plate now with our huddles," says Dr. Maloney. "The medical office assistant can get those things ordered, set up, see which ones they need, which one they haven't had. We can also use Tina to reach out - our nurse clinic nurse to reach out and do that. It allows me to focus more on what the patient wants me to focus on."

To date, Care Transformation has been implemented at 40 OSF sites, covering 80 care teams. Plans are for the remaining sites to undergo the care model change by spring 2018.