

Timely Access, Better Care

Access to medical care, including primary care and specialist services, are key elements of quality care.

Access to care is a core driver of quality, influencing clinical outcomes, patient experience, and system performance. Evidence shows that timely access to primary and specialty care is associated with increased preventive service use, better chronic disease management, and reduced emergency department and inpatient utilization, supporting continuity and earlier intervention by providers. Health systems with strong access to primary care consistently demonstrate improved outcomes, lower mortality, and greater equity.



Make the process easier for patients:

- **Expectations** – Set patient expectations by creating responses and assist front office staff to discuss delays, walk-ins and scheduling patients.
- **Open Schedule** – Dedicated space for scheduled appointments and walk-ins.
- **Same-Day Appointments** – Improve patient satisfaction and reduce urgent care and ED visits.
- **Extended Hours** – Before 8:00 am and after 5:00 pm some days during the week and weekends.
- **Tele-triage Nurses** – Manage urgent calls and situations.
- **Provide Options** – Other physicians, offices, advanced practitioner, etc.

Best Practice Suggestions

56 SECOND CONNECT



Behavior to go beyond the diagnosis and learn about the person

SIT DOWN



When you sit down eye-to-eye with patients, they feel like you've spent more time with them.

ACTIVE LISTENING



Let patients tell their whole story without interruption.

"Access: Exceptional Patient Experience Made Simple." Patient Experience Learning Series, Press Ganey, 2024, www.cahpsprovider.com. Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services. (2024). Quality of care. www.cms.gov/priorities/innovation/key-concepts/quality-care Healthy People 2030. (n.d.). Health care access and quality. U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Office of Disease Prevention and Health Promotion. <https://odphp.health.gov/healthypeople/objectives-and-data/browse-objectives/health-care-access-and-quality>