



Video Transcript: Reducing Patient Wait Time

Speaker 1 (00:04): Do your patients complain about long wait times at your clinic? You're not alone. Actually, the number one complaint among family planning patients is wait time. After all, who wants to wait at the front desk, then in the waiting room, the lab, the hallway, and then in counseling and exam rooms? All that time adds up. [screams] How can you streamline visits and provide your patients with a more positive experience? Apply "Lean Process Improvement" principles.

(00:38): Lean is a quality improvement methodology that helps to eliminate waste and improve flow to maximize customer satisfaction. It encourages you to conduct only the steps, processes, and services that your patients value most. Let's start with how to eliminate waste. What's waste in the first place? It's anything that gets in the way of giving your patients what they need. And how do you get rid of waste? By following these four simple steps.

(01:08): First, review and update your policies using the most current guidelines. Eliminate services that are no longer recommended and not medically indicated. Second, reduce your documentation and paperwork by collecting only information you need. Review intake forms and get rid of any duplicate or unnecessary questions. Just because you need the information multiple times doesn't mean you need multiple forms. Consolidate. Third, verify patient information rather than asking for the same information at every visit. Finally, cross-train staff and avoid duplicating work by defining roles and responsibilities for each person that the patient sees during the visit. Make sure the different staff are not providing the same services or asking patients the same questions. Each of those steps will help to reduce wasted time and energy in your clinic. But once you've reduced your waste, how do you improve flow?

(02:16): Tip number one: Reduce the number of stops a patient makes by moving around them instead of moving them around your clinic. Every time you move the patient is an opportunity for delay. So, put the patient in the exam room and bring services to them, including vitals, labs, counseling, and exams. Tip number two: limit the number of times that staff leave a patient waiting. Prepare for every part of the visit. Prepare charts before the patient arrives. Stock rooms with all the supplies, materials, and equipment you may need. And stock each room in the same way so that you know where things are. Tip number three: avoid unnecessary segmentation of the visit. Instead of having an intake session, an exam, and an exit, just think of it as a single patient visit and get all of the steps done in one seamless process.

(03:16): Applying the principles of lean, reducing waste and improving flow can increase efficiency and reduce wait time in your clinic, leaving you with more time for patient care and happier patients.