



Intermountain of November 2006

Stories

News, Views, People & Plans • Medical Group Edition



Service is key to success

Clinics' service initiatives help improve our patient satisfaction scores

I was more excited than usual to receive the most recent Patient Perceptions of Quality (PPQ) results for our clinics and urgent care services. The August survey results arrived this week and I'm pleased to see the impact of new and ongoing service initiatives. I also appreciate the opportunity to recognize acts of kindness and support by clinic staff that can make a difference to patients.

By J. Phil White
Chief Operations Officer
Intermountain Medical Group

In the August PPQ report, the percent of patients giving an "excellent" rating on their overall experience increased slightly and the percent of patients who "definitely would" recommend the

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clinician to family and friends continued to be over 83 percent! We're seeing record-high scores relating to the helpfulness of receptionists and the patient experience when calling the clinic. In fact, 41.9 percent gave an "excellent" rating to the question, "How would you rate your experience when calling the clinic?" This compares to 28 percent in July 2004. Thanks to those who have taken on process improvement projects involving telephone access. I also appreciate the technical support and consultation Russ Kuck and Camille Jensen provide.

How do they do it? When you hear about the positive results from clinics' service initiatives, you may ask, "How do they do it?" Several managers have willingly shared their initiatives.

Patient information. Marty Petty and the Bountiful InstaCare team recognized the need to provide additional, clearly written patient education and instruction. The patients feel better about the service they receive because they are more informed about what to expect after the visit. (Speaking as one who's tried to listen to the physician's instructions while watching an active child, this is appealing.) The Sports Medicine Clinic in Cache Valley and the Orthopedic Specialty Group in Salt Lake are also developing more educational/instructional materials for their patients.

Leaders at several clinics, including Stephanie Cain at South Sandy, are working on initiatives to help manage patient expectations and ease anxieties prior to the visit. Developing and updating "welcome" letters for new patients is a way to get the first visit off on the "right foot." It is important to remember that

...keep doing the excellent things you're doing for patients for the reason you're doing them... because you care.

accessing health care services often creates a sense of vulnerability and uncertainty about what's happening on a very personal level. Anticipating and providing answers to simple questions (e.g., where to park, which door to enter) can help make the difference between an ordinary and extraordinary introduction to a new clinic and/or clinician.

Patient wait times. Many who have worked on "managing" patient wait times have introduced numerous, inventive ideas. Keeping patients informed about what to expect is one of the most basic steps. Eileen Burr, Medical Tower Family Practice manager, asks her staff to take responsibility for keeping patients on the "information highway" and for making the wait as comfortable as possible. Scheduling realistic appointment times and keeping clinicians informed about the waits is also key, according to Eileen.

Show the way. The staff at the Bountiful Clinic are encouraged, whenever time allows, to escort patients to laboratory or imaging

services located in another part of the building. Marilyn Kehl, clinic manager, reports very positive feedback from patients in response to this initiative. Remember that even though you've been to that area of your clinic a million times, patients may feel they are entering a maze.

Enhancing clinical and service needs. It's obvious that the interaction between the patient and the clinician is pivotal to meeting the patient's clinical and service needs. Clinical services continue to be enhanced. I am impressed with the efforts underway in several of our pediatric offices to address the needs of "high risk" patients and their parents. The Medical Home model has been used in Cache Valley for several years and Balinda Earl, manager of Red Rock Pediatrics in St. George, reports they are working with this model also.

As mentioned, August PPQ results show that 83 percent of patients surveyed "definitely would" recommend the clinician to family and friends. You may recall Dr. Leckman's comments in March's Intermountain Stories about the Clinician-Patient Communication course. This course is being taken by clinicians in the Group to facilitate an enhanced level of understanding and satisfaction. We're on track to even higher levels of patient endorsement.

Before you go... Several managers have shared process improvements surrounding "end of visit" procedures. Rather than letting the patient simply exit the facility, staff members are closing the visit by asking the patient, "Is there anything else I can do for you?" Sharon Ramirez, the psychiatry office manager in St. George, and her staff see this as one means to create a lasting, favorable impression. Not all facilities have a design that allows bringing closure to a visit, but I encourage you to consider how it might be accomplished.

I could continue recounting ongoing, as well as new efforts introduced to meet the needs of the patients we serve. In fact, we should probably have an edition of our Intermountain Stories dedicated to this topic. In the meantime, please keep doing the excellent things you're doing for patients for the reason you're doing them...because you care.

Five signs your kids watch too much TV...

From Top5, copyright by Chris White...

1. Little Jenny declares the dinner table a no-spin zone.
2. Your son took the remote to school to try to fast-forward through the boring parts.
3. When you hand him his allowance, Billy smugly shoves your hand aside, says, "No deal, Mom!" and chooses your brown shoulder bag instead.
4. Your 4-year-old just asked her pediatrician about Flonase.
5. Lately he's been murmuring in a deep, ominous voice, "Mom: Wrong about everything. Wrong for our household. My name is Johnny Smith and I approve this message."

Employees rewarded for their excellent work



Cindy McLeod
Highland Clinic manager

The Medical Group Operations Committee honored three employees during its October 18 meeting. Intermountain Highland Clinic manager Cindy McLeod received the Leadership Excellence award, while Laura Nevens and Jennifer Kirby, long-time receptionists and clinic representatives at Intermountain Sandy Clinic, shared the Partners in Excellence Award.

Leadership Excellence Award. When several Highland Clinic co-workers nominated their manager, Cindy McLeod, for the Leadership in Excellence award, they noted: “One of Cindy’s strengths is her leadership by example. Cindy is never above doing any job whether it be with the medical assistants in the back or covering the front office or doing billing.”

They also noted Cindy’s communication strengths. She keeps the staff informed of the clinic’s scorecard, items that need to be improved and things that are going well. And at staff meetings, Cindy is known as a good listener who seeks input and includes staff in the decision-making process.

“I’m so surprised [at receiving the award],” says Cindy. “I just feel really lucky to have all my co-workers.” Cindy has been with Intermountain for 14 years. She started at Orem Community Hospital, worked for nine years at Utah Valley Regional Medical Center as a clinic coordinator, and has been Highland’s clinic manager for the past two years, where she oversees the budget, the staff and the facility.

“I love my job the staff, the physicians and the patients,” says Cindy. “I feel very, very fortunate to work with the people I do every day.”



Laura Nevens and Jennifer Kirby, Sandy Clinic

Partners in Excellence. When he nominated Laura and Jennifer for the Partners in Excellence Award, Jayson Argyle, Sandy Clinic manager, wrote: “Laura and Jen are both long-standing employees with the Medical Group and are the source of consistent praise for the Clinic. They are great examples of people who put the needs of patients first and help break down some of the inherent barriers in a clinic setting to provide extraordinary care.”

Both Laura and Jennifer were surprised at winning the award. “I just thought it was awesome,” said Laura. “I was very surprised and very honored.”

An Intermountain employee since 1993, Jennifer began at the Sandy Clinic, then held other positions before returning to the clinic six years ago where today she is a receptionist and internal medicine client representative. Laura has worked on and off at Intermountain for 19 years and is also a receptionist and client representative. Laura and Jennifer have worked together for years.

The Sandy Clinic recently implemented patient comment boxes. Both women have received numerous positive comments from

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patients. “The physicians at Sandy’s Internal Medicine department have commented multiple times just how valuable these two employees are,” notes Jayson.

Laura says that to be good at what she and Jennifer do, you have to “leave all your own problems behind, come to work with a positive attitude and put yourself in the position of the patient.” “They are sick,” says Laura, “and we try to be of service and try to make them feel better.”

Know a Medical Group employee who deserves recognition?

The Medical Group has a few formal ways to give and receive recognition:

- **Values in Action Award.** An ongoing recognition that lets clinic managers recognize employees caught in the act of doing work that supports Intermountain’s values.
- **Leadership Excellence Award.** A quarterly recognition of a Medical Group clinic or department manager or coordinator who does their job exceptionally well. Managers and coordinators may be nominated by their peers, teams and other Medical Group employees.
- **Partners in Excellence Award.** This quarterly award recognizes Medical Group employees, teams or work groups that help improve health care delivery, implement clinical improvement strategies, or improve Intermountain processes or procedures. It also recognizes outstanding customer service or patient care initiatives and contributions to the improvement of operational or financial performance. As with the Excellence in Management award, peers, teams and other Medical Group employees can submit nominations for the award.
- **Extraordinary Service Award.** This annual award is presented to a Medical Group employee or physician who contributed to furthering Intermountain’s commitment “to provide care to those with a medical need, regardless of ability to pay,” or provided significant service to the community. Any Intermountain employee or physician can nominate a Medical Group employee or physician for the award.

Contact your human resources representative if you would like to nominate someone for an award.

Clinic Spotlight: Intermountain Taylorsville Clinic Taylorsville Clinic expands to meet patients’ needs

Walk into the Intermountain Taylorsville Clinic on 4700 South just off the Bangerter Highway and what you notice immediately is the activity. It seems a busy place, and that’s an accurate observation. The Taylorsville Clinic is, in fact, one of the most heavily used clinics in the Medical Group.



Intermountain Taylorsville Clinic

“It’s extremely busy,” comments the clinic’s manager, Brynn Beck. On a typical Monday in late October (not a particularly busy time), the family practice area treated 240 patients and the

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Brynn Beck
Taylorsville Clinic manager

InstaCare had close to 200 patients. That doesn't include the 150 patients who came in for flu shots, or those who used the very active pharmacy. Brynn attributes the clinic's high patient volume to its location, range of services and the fact that the clinic addresses the local community's needs.

Growing to serve. Given Taylorsville's level of activity, it is no surprise that it has just built-out the last remaining 6,000 square feet of unused building space. The facility, which opened in July 2002 and replaced an existing building, had one corner of the building left that was unfinished. Now it houses an OB/GYN physician, and next year will provide space for a dermatologist. An ENT physician and other physicians may be added later.

"This additional space will allow us to offer some needed specialty services on the west side that until now haven't been available," says Brett Bringham, operations manager for the Central Salt Lake Region. "There aren't a lot of specialists in the area. The clinic is a good resource for both doctors and patients in that part of the valley."

"This is the most high-profile clinic on the entire west side," notes Brynn. "We offer the largest variety of options to patients in one location in this area." The clinic has seven family practice physicians, one internal medicine and an OB/GYN physician. In addition, laboratory, x-ray services and allergy shots are available along with InstaCare and KidsCare. A mobile MRI visits the clinic once a week. Many of the clinic providers speak Spanish; the clinic attracts a large Hispanic population.

Leading the way. The clinic is not only busy, but a leader. Its InstaCare was the first to go to a completely chartless system for medical records. The clinic also uses digital x-rays. With this system, offsite radiologists can review x-rays and send back their reports often while the patient is still at the clinic. This is just part of the clinic's excellent reputation for service. Brynn notes that patients can usually be seen by a physician on the same day they call in, even in the busy family practice area.

What's ahead? The future points to continued expansion. Intermountain owns land directly to the south of the current clinic where additional growth may one day take place.

"With the recent expansion of the clinic, we're able to provide more resources to our patients, improved convenience and a greater range of services," notes Brett. "This clinic has become an important asset to its community."

The Family Medical History: our least-appreciated genetic tool

Face seems to twist out of shape. Can't control it. Arms dangle all around. Can't control them. Wrists feel weak and my hands wave around in odd ways. I can't stop. All these docs keep asking me about how my mother died of Huntington's Chorea. They never tell me if it's pass-onable or not. So I never know. I believe that every doctor ought to speak plainer so us patients can begin to try to guess partly what's wrong with us. If it's not alcohol which has me, I wonder what it's going to be (Woody Guthrie's biography Klein, 1980).

Just about everyone asks for family history information; almost no one collects it in a format or content that produces the needed information. The Intermountain Clinical Genetics Institute is collaborating with several partners to develop an integrated feature in the EMR that will allow collection of family history, medical information, laboratory information and environmental data and provide underlying clinical decision support for risk assessment.

The basic family medical history is a tool with a long social and political history. Recently, the prominent public personas of Woody Guthrie, John Ritter (thoracic aortic aneurysm) and Gilda Radner (ovarian cancer) led to greater social awareness of the impact of family disorders. However, concerns about insurance, the possibility of social stigma, denial in families, and little knowledge about familial conditions contribute to a lack of recognition of risk in families.

The Surgeon General, the Centers for Disease Control, the American Medical Association (AMA), and the American Academy of Family Practice (AAFP), to name a few, have national initiatives to address the need to better use and understand the “best genetic test.”

The AMA website (www.ama-assn.org/go/genetics) includes great information on a variety of genetics-related topics. The website provides a free Family Medical Information Pocket Guide and three sample family history questionnaires that include the Prenatal Genetic Screening Questionnaire, Pediatric Clinical Genetics Questionnaire, and an Adult Family History Form.

Several tools exist to help families collect their own family health history information. Patients may be directed to the Surgeon General's website on family health history information <http://www.hhs.gov/familyhistory/>. The CDC (http://www.cdc.gov/genomics/info/reports/research/famhist_assess.htm) and the Utah Department of Health (<http://health.utah.gov/genomics/familyhistory/familyhistory.html>) also offer information on collecting family health history.

Seasonal Safety Tips

As the weather turns colder and the holidays approach, here are a few tips to keep in mind that will help keep you safe and snug this winter.



- Remember that grounds may be icy so check your footwear to see if wear has made the soles of your shoes slick! Slow down when you're moving from parking areas to the building to minimize the chance of slips and falls.
- If you're a manager, check your facility walkways and grounds during stormy periods to ensure that conditions remain safe for patients, employees and guests. Keep some salt and snow shovels on hand for emergency use when those middle-of-the-day storms hit.
- Remember to clear off your windows before driving your car. A clear vision helps minimize accidents.
- Before using a space heater, make sure it's allowed in your building. Heaters can overload circuits and interfere with computers. Only use space heaters that turn off automatically if they're tipped over.
- Daylight hours are shorter. If you work after dark, park or move your car to well-lighted areas.
- Use caution with holiday decorations; be aware of flammability issues and do not hang decorations from fire sprinklers, wiring, or other fragile projections. Consider potential damage to walls and ceilings before you hang decorations.

Task Force ends after arriving at no official conclusions

The final meeting of the Legislature's Privately Owned Health Care Organization Task Force adjourned early in November after Task Force members were unable to agree on the contents of a final report.

All nine House members of the Task Force voted to accept the final draft report, which was written by the Task Force staff. But since a majority of Task Force senators voted against the draft report, the Task Force was left without an official final document.

The draft report focused mostly on the independent study of competition in Utah healthcare markets that was commissioned by the Task Force. The study, released last May, concluded that healthcare markets in Utah were competitive and that consumers benefitted from the competition. It also concluded that Intermountain Healthcare practices are not anti-competitive (on the contrary, the report said Intermountain's presence in Utah stimulated vigorous competition), and it cautioned legislators to avoid taking regulatory action.

Additions to the final report attempted to cast doubt on the independent study's conclusions. Task Force co-chair Sen. Michael Waddoups, R-West Jordan, suggested two separate additions to the

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final report. One addition, which was dismissed without a vote, called the independent study “general in nature” and “not conclusive as to any recommended changes.” The more heavily debated addition ignored the independent consultant’s findings. It said Utah’s healthcare market still had “issues related to patient choice, access to affordable care, and a level playing field for competition...in the view of many.” That addition, too, was voted down.

Linda Leckman, MD receives Pathfinder Award



Linda Leckman, MD

Intermountain Medical Group’s CEO, Linda Leckman, MD, received special recognition from the Salt Lake Chamber on November 15 as one of five 2006 Pathfinder Award winners. The award was presented as part of the Chamber’s 30th Annual Women & Business Conference during the Athena Award Luncheon held at the Grand America Hotel.

The Pathfinder Awards are given to community leaders who demonstrate excellence, creativity and initiative in business, and who champion women in leadership roles and in the community. Dr. Linda Leckman was honored as “a role model in the healthcare industry who promotes and encourages women in professional careers,” and was recognized as a “strong influential leader.”

Dr. Leckman has been CEO of the Medical Group since 1996. For 14 years prior to that, she was in private practice as a general surgeon. Dr. Leckman is a graduate of Texas Christian University, with a bachelor’s degree in History. She received her medical degree from the University of New Mexico. As a board-certified general surgeon, Dr. Leckman has held the positions of Medical Staff President at Alta View Hospital, chairman of the Department of Surgery for Alta View and Cottonwood Hospitals, chairman of the Medical Group Recruitment and Credentialing Committee, and member of the Board of Trustees of IHC. She also currently serves on the Physicians’ Licensing Board for the State of Utah.

Four others received 2006 Pathfinder Awards: Paulette Cary, general sales manager at KSFI FM 100 /KUTR AM 820; Leigh Von Der Esch, film commissioner for the State of Utah; Leann Linderman, executive vice president of Zion’s Bank; and Sabina Zunguze, owner of Beautiful Options. In addition, Marilyn Tang, founder and president of Certified Handling Systems, received the 2006 Athena Business Leader of the Year Award.

New physicians in the Medical Group

South Salt Lake: **Bharani Srinivasan, MD**, is practicing internal medicine at the Southridge Clinic.

Utah County: **Terrell Thomson, MD**, is a hospitalist practicing at the American Fork Hospital.

Southwest Utah: **Daniel Davie, MD**, is an urgent care physician at the Hurricane InstaCare. **John Jentzer, MD**, is practicing electrophysiology at Southwest Cardiology.

CHEER in your PAYCHECK!

A little something extra in your paycheck says “thank you”

To thank employees for their dedication to “Extraordinary Care,” Intermountain Healthcare’s Board of Trustees has once again approved a year-end payment this year. The thank-you payment, along with Intermountain’s traditional holiday remembrance, will be included as separate line items in your December 8 paycheck.

“We have so much to celebrate,” says Bill Nelson, Intermountain’s president. “We’ve arrived at our first anniversary of introducing extraordinary care and superior service. We’re working to improve our ability to deliver what we believe our patients and enrollees deserve from us. We thank you for embracing our very important and ambitious goals and for doing your work with such skill and care.”

How much will you receive? Employees who’ve worked 1,656 hours or more this year (an average of at least 72 hours per pay period) will get \$450 plus a holiday remembrance of \$80.

Employees who’ve worked between 552 and 1,655 hours (an average of between 24 and 71 hours per pay period) will receive \$275 plus an \$80 holiday remembrance.

Employees who’ve worked between 100-551 hours (an average of less than 24 hours per pay period) will get \$125 plus a holiday remembrance of \$45. The figures include all hours worked through the pay period that ended on November 4.

Employees who have worked less than 100 hours by November 4, temporary employees, and employees who left Intermountain before December 2 aren’t eligible for the payments.

“We know our 28,000 employees are among the brightest, most talented people in the country,” Bill says. “Although we may not always be able to share an extra financial reward, I’m delighted that we can express our appreciation this way again this year – and I hope it makes your holiday season brighter.”

