

Roadmap for Reducing ED Utilization

Step One: Perform Root Cause Analysis – Why are patients seeking care in the ED prior to visiting the clinic?

- Develop patient and practice assessments to identify the root cause of patients going to the ED instead of the clinic.
- Call/survey 20 patients per clinic and ask standard set of questions on assessment.
- Assess practice to identify operations that could be contributing to high ED utilization (rolling phones, limited hours for scheduling patient visits, triage protocols, etc.).

Step Two: ED Follow-Up Process – Establish a standard process for outreach to patients who went to the ED.

- Obtain data from the hospital with daily discharge information. Use the data to call patients who visited the ED and conduct medication reconciliation, provide patient education on the proper use of the ED, and schedule a follow-up clinic appointment if necessary. Ensure proper documentation of calls with patient.

Step Three: Access – Establish a standard process to meet the needs of patients requiring urgent care.

- Encourage patients to call the clinic first (prior to seeking care at the ED). Look for trends in patient needs when they call the clinic in need of care and make modifications to clinic workflow where appropriate.

Step Four: Patient Education – Educate patients on the proper use of the ED.

- Launch a 'Call Us First' campaign using flyers, business cards, etc. Include information on when to utilize the clinic, when to visit urgent care, and when it's appropriate to utilize the ED. Track the number of patients who visit the clinic after calling, and the number of patients who do not visit the clinic. Those who visit the clinic can be counted as an 'ED case avoided.'

Step Five: Care Management Referrals – Ensure a referral process exists for patients who need care management.

- Establish a standard referral process for care management, especially when caring for high utilizers.

Step Six: Sustainability – Develop Resources

- Develop resources for practice-wide use for sharing best practices, tools, and tactics to reduce ED utilization.