

Practice Hints for Staff and Providers

- Look at the schedule ahead of time: 1 month, 1 week, 1 day, today.
- Do everything you can with each visit (“max-packing”). Ask the patient what is desired or needed. Use the computer to find future appointments, tests or preventive services that might be required for that patient.
- When seeing a patient, make an early decision to do all the work. Find ways to keep patients from coming back.
- Prepare for the next visit today. Get lab tests, refills done for the next visit (do tomorrow’s work today).
- Anticipate the visits. Set up PAPs, procedures, etc. to be prepared.
- Prepare for the unexpected. The patient with a cough may need a physical.
- Prepare the rooms in advance. Use card files that describe the procedures and the instruments.
- Ensure that medical assistants work with the same provider. Develop an “instinct” about needs.
- If there is an error (i.e. patient scheduled with “incorrect” provider), fix it now, and talk about it later.
- Check the rooms for equipment and supplies early and after. Don’t make the provider leave the room to look.
- Set-up PAPS early. Stay one PAP ahead.
- Constantly review the schedule for patients who only need refill, lab, injection or blood work. Call the patients.
- Take a quick look at the schedule to see if most patients got an appointment same-day. This is a quick check for “system health.”
- See if patients with return visits are scheduled early in the day, and on days when the clinic is normally less busy. If patients with return visits are scattered on the schedule and the early AM appointments are not filled, there may be a problem. Book “return” appointments early in the day, later in the week (normally the harder to fill slots).
- If same-day patients are on the early schedule, recognize that the patients called early.
- If there is a delay at the desk, go out and get the patient.
- Part-time providers will have more pre-booked appointments.