

13 Fixes for Common Primary Care Hassels

A study in [*Annals of Family Medicine*](#) details how some physician practices have eased the pain through care redesigns. These clinics:

1. Plan ahead for patient visits in such ways as having patients get lab tests done before appointments so results can be discussed in the office.
2. Expand nurse or medical assistant rooming protocols to help cover elements such as administering vaccines or scheduling preventive screenings.
3. Use standing orders to let nurses treat simple problems.
4. Extend responsibility for health coaching, care coordination and integrated behavioral health to nonphysician members of the team.
5. Have the entire team take responsibility for panel management through such actions as sending reminder letters to patients about over-due preventive services.
6. Use a medical assistant or other team member as a “scribe” to help complete electronic documentation.
7. Standardize and synchronize 12-month prescription renewals for patients with stable chronic conditions.
8. Use a nurse or medical assistant to help manage the physician’s email inbox by filtering out normal lab results, regular prescription renewals and other things for which the doctor is not needed.
9. Talk to other team members face-to face to get questions answered more efficiently than through email.
10. Sit close to team members to facilitate communication.
11. Use daily huddles to help anticipate problems.
12. Hold regular team meetings to review quality and other performance data.
13. Map the flow of work in the office to spot where effort is wasted and devise more efficient ways for operating.

“INSEARCH OF JOY IN PRACTICE: A REPORT OF 23 HIGH-FUNCTIONING PRIMARY CARE PRACTICES,” ANNALS OF FAMILY MEDICINE, Vol. 11, No. 3, May/June 2013