



ENABLING QUALITY IMPROVEMENT IN PRACTICE

# Tower Hamlets Our Latest Newsletter (18/05/2020)

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## Practice success stories to brighten your weekend

Happy Friday, people of East London!

The **sun** is meant to be making a striking return this weekend (well, at least for half of it), so hoping to leave you on a high with some juicy good news stories, straight from the mouths of two of our practices. Passing the mic straight on to them....

**GOUGH WALK**

**TRIAGE AS A QI PROJECT**

**EVEN BEFORE COVID-19!**



Due to limited appointment slots, we were concerned about the relatively high number of patients we were turning away each day. We decided to introduce a triage appointment system that would mean that all patients that called or submitted an e-Consult would be booked in for a telephone 'clinical assessment' call. On the call, a GP would either address their needs right away or book them in for a face to face appointment. Our goal was to ensure that every patient contact was dealt with on clinical merits.

To ensure an inclusive change journey, we kicked off with "a listening tour" to discuss our plans with our clinical and administrative teams, and collectively agree the best way forward. With the approval of our clinical teams, we decided to introduce a hybrid triage system in January 2020. Throughout the implementation process, we held daily huddles where clinical cases were discussed and feedback was used to tweak our triage clinics. Also, our in-house QI team met fortnightly with our QI Coaches to monitor impact of tweaks and use data to guide our decisions.

This project has been a huge success for our practice and early data shows that we increased our number of contacts by 64%. Where a traditional GP face to face clinic had capacity for 18 patients booked through a routine appointment, our new triage system now allows for contact with up to 28 patients per session. Better still, every one of these 28 patients is now clinically triaged and dealt with in a timely manner, resulting in increased uplift and a significant reduction in unmet demands.

The feedback from our patients have been positive and our day-to-day appointment-related complaints have gone down. At Gough Walk, our staff and patient satisfaction remain our priority and with everyone aligning around this new triage process, we have proof that this is a fair and robust system which is here to stay. In typical QI style, we will continue to monitor and improve on the success we have already seen.

Lastly, we would like to thank Obi, Gilur and the EQUIP team for all the support they have given us on this journey.

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Prior to this project, we found ourselves with a backlog of un-scanned documents, due to staff shortages. This raised concerns about the impact of delaying patient medications, follow-ups and referrals, and led to the launch of our QI project on Documents.

We started with daily monitoring of the volume of letters received, scanned and sent to each GP's inbox. We found that we had approximately 180 documents being sent to our doctors inboxes – about 40 letters per GP!

We decided to work on cutting down that number to ensure that we were making the best use of our clinicians' time. We trained our admin staff to triage all letters, ensuring that only letters that needed clinical action were passed on to our GPs. Others were dealt with by appropriate staff members and scanned on to the patients notes. Our doctors also started to triage the letters they got so we could scan them too.

All through the process, we collected data to track progress and met regularly as a QI team to tweak the process, as needed. To date, we have continued monitoring the process to ensure we do not fall back to our old ways!

The overall result has felt too good to be true!

We have exceeded our aim to “reduce the number of documents to in GP workflow by 70%”, much to our doctors’ satisfaction and we can confidently say that this Quality Improvement change is sustainable!

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So there you have it... higher throughput, less paperwork... Change is happening fast, all in service of happier staff, and happier patients. Plus, with more appointments to manage Monday madness, and less paperwork to deal with at work, even the weekend feels that much sweeter.

Leadership is the ability to facilitate movement in the needed direction and have people feel good about it. – *Tom Smith, Partners in Leadership*