

America's Most Valuable Care – Primary Care Snapshots

Our team identified the following 11 front line primary care practices in communities large and small that illustrate 'bright spots' in our nation's healthcare system—small clinical teams that deliver high-quality care at a lower-than-average total cost to commercially insured populations.

Banner Health Clinic Internal Medicine – Phoenix, AZ

Primary care clinic owned by the Banner Health System, staffed by four full- and two part-time internists, nine medical assistants (MAs), seven support staff, and one dedicated nurse case manager.

- ✓ Practice follows care pathways developed by clinical consensus; standardization enables greater delegation to MAs.
- ✓ Each physician dyad is supported by 3 MAs who work together in a layout that encourages constant communication.
- ✓ Physicians prioritize taking the time to help patients to make well-informed care decisions and assure rapid access for patients. On occasion, the physicians have opened up the clinic after hours to help a patient rather than send them to the ED.

Baptist Medical Group, Memphis Primary Care – Memphis, TN

Primary care practice owned by the Baptist Medical Group and run by one family physician and one internist, supported by two medical assistants, two front desk staff, one office manager, and one x-ray technician.

- ✓ Practice is noted for seeking and responding to feedback, and using it for improvement in the patient experience.
- ✓ Staff systematically ensure patients get recommended care, in or out of the practice, through careful follow-up.
- ✓ Physicians have a strong commitment to keep patients out of the hospital. They treat what they safely can in the office, take their own calls 2 out of 3 nights and give their cell phone number to patients they think are at risk of a health crisis.

Family Physicians Group – Kissimmee, FL

One of 25 locations of an independent, multi-specialty group. This site is led by four primary care physicians, supported by a physician assistant, 11 medical assistants, three case managers, one health coach, and one social worker. The practice sees a high proportion of elderly patients with complex medical and psychosocial needs.

- ✓ Practice prides itself on being available to patients 24/7, and has home monitoring in place for its highest risk patients.
- ✓ Case managers lead care planning for complex patients and a "concierge" is available to help with things like transportation for office visits and translation for their largely Spanish-speaking, socioeconomically disadvantaged patient population.
- ✓ Staff members maintain close relationships with a select group of specialists and track the quality and affordability of their care, in order to ensure value. They work with insurers to make sure these specialists are in the insurers' networks.

Florida Medical Clinic Internal Medicine – Zephyrhills, FL

One of 26 locations of an independent, multi-specialty group. It is led by two full-time internists and one part-time family physician, supported by two nurse practitioners (NPs), five medical assistants and two referral coordinators.

- ✓ Practice is noted for providing outstanding access and close care management, sometimes seeing a patient as often as three times a week to avoid a crisis. Attention is paid to post-hospitalization follow-up, which reduces readmission.
- ✓ Each Medicare patient receives a comprehensive annual physical conducted by the NPs to emphasize preventive care.
- ✓ Small office space fosters a lively environment of learning and communication between physicians and staff.

Northwest Family Physicians – Crystal, MN

Independent 3-location primary care group led by 16 family practice physicians, supported by five physician assistants, one nurse practitioner, 14 nurses, and 16 medical assistants.

- ✓ Physicians seek training to deepen their expertise in a medical sub-specialty and use it to support their colleagues. For example, deeper expertise allows them to perform low-complexity procedures and diagnostics for patients that might otherwise require referral to a physician sub-specialist.
- ✓ The practice chooses the specialists on-site for patient convenience. This includes a half-day per week cardiologist who reads diagnostic studies and makes guideline-based recommendations.

- ✓ Physicians work closely with physician assistants, medical assistants, and triage nurses to offer rapid and responsive access and care, supported by standing orders and protocols. Well-managed team-based care enables a 4-day work week for physicians.

Ridgewood Med-Peds – Rochester, NY

An independent, physician-owned primary care clinic with five primary care physicians—all certified in both internal medicine and pediatrics—supported by one nurse practitioner, four licensed practical nurses, one registered nurse, two receptionists, three telephone schedulers, and four record-keepers.

- ✓ The practice follows evidence-based protocols. Physicians routinely discuss new evidence and sign on to updated care protocols, which keeps them current and enables them to delegate many tasks to other members of their care team.
- ✓ For patients with chronic illnesses, the timing of prescription refills is coordinated to prompt visits at the right intervals.
- ✓ Physicians refer to a small, informal network of trusted specialists, and carefully manage the referral process, writing a detailed note outlining their expectations to the specialist, which they also take the time to explain to the patient.

St. Jude Heritage Medical Group – Yorba Linda, CA

A multi-specialty group practice that is part of the St. Joseph Health system. This site is led by 12 family physicians, six pediatricians, and five internists with one nurse practitioner, one physician assistant, and one licensed vocational nurse. On-site specialists include OB/GYNs, dermatologists, allergists, a gastroenterologist and an endocrinologist.

- ✓ The practice offers same-day access and, with integrated urgent care, is open 7 days a week. Continuity is emphasized.
- ✓ Specialists provide education sessions to primary care physicians to help them take on low-complexity specialty care.
- ✓ Patients are seen in a special transition clinic post-hospitalization, which reduced readmissions by 67%.
- ✓ The office space was designed with patient flow in mind. There are no waiting rooms and care teams work together in a shared space, facilitating communication between patient interactions. This improved physician productivity by 21%.

South Cove Community Health Center – Quincy, MA

Independent, federally qualified health center, one of four sites, that serves a predominantly Asian population in the Boston area. 11 internal medicine physicians and two nurse practitioners rotate through the four sites. The Quincy site has 5 registered nurses, a medical assistant per provider, three front desk staff, and three referral coordinators. The center sees a socioeconomically disadvantaged, predominantly Asian population, many of whom do not speak English.

- ✓ The center is open 7 days a week, accommodates patient walk-ins, and offers a 24-hour nurse advice line.
- ✓ Referrals for care outside of the practice are carefully coordinated, often include a translator, and are stratified based on urgency. The referral coordinators “close the loop” on urgent referrals and proactively bring patients in for preventive care and screening.
- ✓ The center acts to make sure patients’ social and behavioral needs are also met. Mental health is integrated in a culturally appropriate way, and patients receive support to help them maintain health insurance coverage.

SureCare Medical Center – Springboro, OH

Hospital-owned and operated primary care practice with seven primary care physicians—one internal medicine, five family physicians, one part-time family physician—supported by one physician assistant, with one medical assistant assigned to each physician, two medical assistants for lab draws, one office manager, eight front desk staff, and three billers.

- ✓ The practice is open six days a week, early morning and late into the evening four days per week, maximizing access and convenience. Staggered shifts and sufficient scale help maintain good work-life balance across the care team.
- ✓ Physicians refer patients to each other initially for some specialty care, leveraging expertise developed by some of the primary care physicians in dermatology and orthopedics.
- ✓ SureCare has trained medical assistants in every support role. This cross-training, combined with standardized work, has increased office efficiency and smoothed patient flow. As a result, physicians report being able to spend more hands-on time with their patients because they have less administrative work.

TriHealth West Chester Medical Group – West Chester, OH

Primary care clinic that is part of the TriHealth system in Ohio, led by two internists and two family physicians and supported by one registered nurse, three medical assistants, one registered nurse case manager, and one care coordinator.

- ✓ The practice is open 6 days a week and physicians take their own call 5 days a week in order to ensure continuity.
- ✓ The practice risk-stratifies patients to connect patients with the greatest needs to a dedicated on premises care coordinator. This has improved clinical outcomes and reduced cost of care in patients with chronic illnesses, such as diabetes. In addition, higher complexity patients are seen by an internist-RN team who care for these patients together.
- ✓ The front office staff members are all medical assistants, who adhere to symptom-based protocols that allow them to rapidly assess and triage a wide variety of problems and clinically informed scheduling.

USAA Health Services – San Antonio, TX

Primary care clinic located at the headquarters of a large insurance/financial organization and staffed by one part-time physician, three advanced practice providers, eight registered nurses, four medical assistants, and five administrative staff.

- ✓ Accommodates both scheduled and walk-in patients with wait times that average less than six minutes.
- ✓ Uses a large set of evidence-based protocols embedded in the clinic's electronic health record system to guide care delivery using lower cost providers.
- ✓ Utilizes a unique risk-stratification tool that gives all patients a risk index score based on analysis of prior direct medical costs and measures of occupational health to highlight patients likely to benefit from extra support.
- ✓ Patients are offered rapid access to select specialists. During allergy season, they run a nurse-staffed allergy clinic supervised by a local allergist to improve access and compliance with allergen desensitization injection regimens. The clinic contracts with a cardiologist who offers rapid preferential access to referrals from the clinic.