Transitioning to Team-Based Primary Care

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Primary care can address the “Triple Aim,” by reducing costs, improving quality, and addressing population health. However, the ability of primary care to deliver on the triple aim is dependent on a fourth aim that is not usually considered. This is the ability of frontline health professionals and doctors to work fluently in high functioning teams. With this in mind, designers know that intricacies within the health system render challenges to management. Our intervention attempts to facilitate the cultural transformation of a primary care practice to be centered on team-based care.

Figure 1: Dimensions of team based care

Response rate for survey was 86.7% (respondents/total). Respondents consisted of 4 medical assistants, 4 physicians, 1 nurse practitioner, and 4 front desk personnel. The average team score based on our survey was 3.38 on a scale of 1-5. For specific dimensions like process accountability, conflict mediation, and ‘feeling’ like a team the scores were 2.77, 2.69, and 3.60, respectively.

Team Dynamics at The FMC

Figure 2: Baseline data of FMC staff from survey on team dynamics

Discussion

Primary care has been thought to be critical for health systems to achieve quadruple aim. We investigated the effect of bi-monthly meetings and liberating structures on the effect of team dynamics. Baseline data from our survey suggests that the staff believe they are moderately proficient in working as a team. At the end of the intervention, we hope to see improvement in the team dynamics of the Family Medicine Center personnel.