Tackling No-Show Rates: Addressing Barriers in a Free Clinic's Attendance

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Problem Statement

- Social determinants of health (SDOH) contribute to 50% of variations in health outcomes.
- A free healthcare clinic in Fort Wayne, IN, partnered with us to investigate if SDOH could be affecting their no-show rates.
- This study details the results of a survey conducted at the clinic that was used to reveal factors contributing to their high no-show rate.

Rationale

- SDOH have a significant impact on patient populations, often contributing to health disparities.
- Intervening on factors that contribute to poor SDOH could have a profound impact on many lives.
- While the clinic helps to bridge the gap in healthcare by providing free healthcare services, it is hypothesized that SDOH are influencing the quality of care the clinic can provide.

Methods

1 Survey Design and Administration

- 10-question anonymous survey was administered by clinic staff at the end of patient intake.
- Participants received a verbal explanation of the study's purpose before completing the questionnaire.

2 Intervention Implementation

- A flyer was developed using Canva and launched on April 23, 2024. It listed local resources tailored to address the problems identified in the survey.
- Flyers were placed in examination rooms, the medication waiting area, and the front lobby.

3 Data Collection and Analysis

- Pre-intervention no-show rates (October 1, 2023 – December 31, 2023) were compared to post-intervention rates (July 1, 2024 – September 30, 2024).
- Statistical analysis was performed to evaluate the effectiveness of the intervention in reducing missed appointments.

Results

- Work obligations (29.7%) and forgetting (26.6%) were the top reasons, followed by lack of transportation (15.6%) and childcare (7.8%).
- Most patients preferred appointment reminders 1 week prior (43%) or 2 days prior (38%).
- No significant change in no-show rates was observed within the first three months of posting materials; newer Spanish-language outreach is under evaluation.
- Addressing barriers like work conflicts, transportation, and language access, alongside multilingual outreach efforts, is vital for improving clinic attendance.

Potential Impact

Provide resources to help mitigate barriers that prevent patients from attending appointments

Decrease no-show rates and improve relationship continuity

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