

Preface

HAVE YOU EVER had a “wow!” experience at your primary care visit? An encounter in which you felt fully engaged, heard, and an equal partner in your healthcare? Probably not. Too often we experience delays in getting an appointment, long waiting times after we arrive at the scheduled time, harried staff, and providers who interrupt seconds into our explanation of our reason for the visit.

How do we ensure a consistently positive experience for our patients, every encounter, every time? This book will provide tips and tools to help you on that journey. Make no mistake, this is not a silver bullet. It takes commitment, hard work, and every staff member’s connection to purpose.

We have designed, tested, and refined these strategies since 2002 in the primary care setting: specifically, a group of clinics across the country located in both urban and rural areas. As healthcare evolves to meet rapidly changing expectations and a new normal as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, so must our approaches to providing a fulfilling primary care experience.

CHAPTER CONTENTS AND FEATURES

Chapter 1 lays out the drivers for improving the patient experience in the primary care space. Chapters 2 and 3 explore the key elements of the patient-centered medical home model, including shared medical appointments and telehealth.

Chapters 4 and 5 describe tactics to promote staff and provider engagement by focusing on behavioral standards, reward and recognition, and creating joy in the workplace. Chapter 6 shifts to patient and family engagement, featuring the importance of the social determinants of health and patient activation in creating an effective provider–patient partnership.

Chapter 7 highlights the key aspects of environmental design, including the onstage–offstage model for team-based care. Chapters 8 and 9 focus on measurement—the key performance indicators to evaluate the performance of your primary care practice.

Chapter 10 discusses lessons learned from the COVID-19 pandemic as they apply to the primary care space.

APPENDIX AND RESOURCE LIST

Last, we share several of the tools and templates we have developed and tested such as a shared medical appointment guide, the SMART goal patient worksheet, and a template for showcasing process improvements.

We hope that this material helps all who provide primary care—medical and behavioral health clinicians, nurses, administrators, technologists, social workers, and nutritionists—to deliver the best and safest experience possible for the primary care patient.