Primary care physicians are at the center of the clinical team. As the healthcare environment changes to introduce new models of care, primary care practices must evolve to assume greater responsibility for care coordination.

At the same time, inpatient work is shifting to hospitalists, while urgent care and walk-in clinics are responding to patients’ desire for expanded hours and convenience.

HCA Physician Services Group (PSG), a leader in operating quality-driven, successful primary care practices, has compiled a playbook containing a series of best practices highlighting excellence in primary care practices.

The proceeding content is a snapshot of the key insights housed within the playbook.

**Key tips:**

- Create a patient and family advisory council to gain additional perspective on patient needs and satisfaction, and evaluate the practice’s reputation
- Communicate excellent clinical quality of providers to patients and referral channels
- Understand access points and referral channels, like urgent care and retail pharmacy clinics, that can drive primary care practice growth; utilize HCA Division Sales Team representatives for additional support
- Patients value access to care, so incorporate same-day appointment or near-same-day appointment mechanisms into the overall schedule
- To increase growth while improving satisfaction and quality, deploy technology and tools such as:
  - Patient portal – Engages patients in their health and increases access to information
  - PhyTel – Calls patients who have not seen their primary care physician for a specific period of time

**Growth**

Primary care practices that think like a customer grow. Thriving practices have a strong reputation for clinical quality and patient satisfaction, manage their responsiveness to patients and referring physicians, and provide easy access.

“Primary care practices that think like a customer grow.”
Productivity

In a primary care practice, the most valuable asset is the provider’s time. By increasing the productivity of the practice and the providers, the health of the practice will also increase.

“The health of a practice will increase when the provider’s time is maximized.”

Key tips:

• Scheduling providers’ time is a critical component to success – five to ten appointment types should suffice for a busy primary care practice

• Consider physical space and its layout to maximize efficiency – the most efficient primary care providers operate in 1,000 square feet of space per provider in a pod structure with three exam rooms

• Establish minimum productivity expectations for physicians and advanced practice providers, tailored to each individual’s licensure, years in practice, area demographics, and market competition

• Ensure each provider is practicing to the top of his or her licensure or certification – tasks that do not require a physician should be performed by someone else

• Practice productivity measures should be regularly (at least monthly) monitored, trended, and compared to the expected outcome and to an external benchmark

• Utilize technology to drive better results and continually improve to make things efficient, effective and timely for all involved

Service

Primary care practices are the foundation of a patient’s health and wellness. They should create a culture and environment that focuses on excellent patient experience and superior outcomes by continually seeking to improve efficiency, quality, and utilizing technology to drive better results.

“Primary care practices should create a culture and environment that focuses on excellent patient experience.”

Key tips:

• Formalize the patient recovery and feedback collection process

• Clinical and practice staff should be empowered to act and resolve patient service issues

• Provide training on customer and patient service, and recruit providers and staff based on their ability to provide superior service

• Create an environment where the focus is on a great patient experience and outcomes – share patient satisfaction survey results and discuss patient service daily, set daily expectations, and celebrate it uniformly