Reducing the Missed Appointment Rate in an Urban Pediatric Primary Care Site

PURPOSE
The Missed Appointment Initiative aims to reduce the missed appointment rate by implementing practical strategies tailored to the population served.

BACKGROUND
Missed clinic appointments, or no-shows, used interchangeably, impact the timely delivery of patient care, the cost of care, resource utilization, and productivity. Practice sites serving an economically disadvantaged patient population may have high incidences of missed appointments.

METHODOLOGY
Pre-intervention questionnaires related to the initiative were created to assess perspectives of the practice team and families. The responses were used to help tailor interventions for the Missed Appointment Initiative. An awareness campaign related to the initiative was launched to raise awareness, enhance communication and engagement and to also create excitement amongst practice team members and families.

RESULTS
Within six months of implementing the initiative, the weekly missed appointment rate was reduced to an average of 12.8% which was a 33% reduction from the baseline rate of 19%.

IMPLICATIONS
Appointment reminders can be implemented immediately in certain practice settings depending on resources and technology. Importantly, strategies that are used to improve the missed appointment rate in a healthcare setting should be tailored to the patient population served.