Implementing a Structured TeamSTEPPS Tool to Improve Communication in an Ambulatory Clinic Setting

PURPOSE
The purpose of this process improvement project was to implement a Team STEPPS communication tools in the ambulatory environment. This implementation was intended to improve patient satisfaction, enhance communication, and improve workflow efficiency.

BACKGROUND
The project was implemented in the ambulatory setting at an academic center in the Texas Medical Center, Houston, Texas.

METHODOLOGY
The Context, Input, Process, Product (CIPP) model was chosen for evaluation based purposes. Metrics included employee survey data and clinic incident reporting (safety scoops). Teams were educated on the developed huddle tool and associated processes. The Plan-Do-Study-Act methodology was then utilized to promote sustainability and problem resolution.

RESULTS
Press Ganey post-implementation data reflected an average of 11% increase in positive feedback for the associated area. Team survey results increased by a combined 4.87%. There was also an increase in safety incident reporting and decrease in the number of severe events. Overall data indicated improved communication, collaboration, and outcomes.

IMPLICATIONS
Improving communication within the multidisciplinary healthcare setting has numerous advantages. Benefits include improved dialogue, increased opportunity to optimize care, and enhanced outcomes for complex case-patients.

The communication tool ultimately promoted a thorough approach in addressing multidisciplinary based clinic needs. Future considerations should be made for external support based services. Continued monitoring and vigilance of the process are also critical in promoting sustainability and further throughput.