

Improving Access to Care: Tips for Health Care Organizations



There are several barriers that may prevent patients from being able to access health services timely. Characteristics such as age, ethnicity, economic resources, gender, and geography are significant factors. Health care organizations must act to reduce these disparities with practical steps to identify and overcome barriers.



Assess Common Barriers

Consider your patient population.

- Do they rely on private or public transportation?
- Do your hours work with common work schedules in the area?
- Are there common financial issues?
- What access do they have to follow up care?



Prepare for Inclusivity

Think about the accommodations your organization offers.

- Are you accessible for patients with a variety of disabilities?
- Are your clinical and office staff knowledgeable about a variety of cultures?
- Do you have language translation resources?



Diversify your Workforce

Evaluate your staff's diversity.

- Does your staff look like your patients?
- Do you have multiple cultures, religions, ethnicities, and ages represented?
- Are you actively working to recruit and retain a diverse workforce?



Increase Access to Information

Ensure your patients have convenient access to common questions.

- Do you offer multiple methods of follow-up contact?
- How do patients know if they are eligible to receive care?
- Are you transparent about charges and fees?
- Do you have a list of nearby locations for prescriptions?
- Are patients aware of what to do if something goes wrong?



Extend your Care Reach

Move beyond the four walls of traditional practice to meet patients where they are.

- Do you offer virtual encounters?
- Are there care coordination services available?
- Is there a mobile clinic opportunity?



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