Tips to reduce client wait time

By Bash Halow and Steve Tracy

Everyone is in a hurry these days, and clients are no different. But there are better solutions to decreasing the time clients wait than just working faster. Here are a few ideas to help keep clients moving through your clinic — and coming back.

When making appointments, monitor the appointment book and offer clients the option of coming in during slower times instead of times when the schedule is more tenuously booked.

When confirming appointments, make sure the client understands that arriving on time can help them get the most out of their valuable appointment time.

If a client is already late, have your receptionist call and ask if everything is okay. If possible, offer the client a rescheduled appointment so he or she won't feel rushed.

Review the appointment book at the beginning of the day to formulate a game plan for the busiest times.

Give the doctors a chance to review the charts of complicated cases before patients arrive.

Prepare vaccines, health certificates and estimates ahead of time when possible.

If a client is coming in for an appointment with a technician for laboratory work, have the technician write up a laboratory form before the patient arrives, then leave it with the chart.

Create an atmosphere in which the whole hospital cares about wait time. When your technicians or doctors walk into the lobby to call one client, have them indicate to others in the waiting room that they will be brought in shortly.

Have your receptionists walk out from behind the front desk and interact with both clients and pets.

Inform the receptionist when appointments are running behind so clients scheduled for later appointments can be alerted about the delay.

Never leave a client alone in an examination room for too long. Have technicians enter often and update the client on the wait time.

Make sure your staff knows to give the travel sheet to the receptionists as soon as the examination is complete.

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