

Distinguishing management and leadership competencies

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Self check-in for appointments in outpatient setting
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It is a common occurrence to find patients in long queues waiting to check-in for medical check-ups and care especially in the developing countries. Building a stand or booth where individuals seeking treatment can check-in by themselves is imperative as it helps do away with long queues. Such self-check-in stands ought to be constructed at the access door of the health institution or outpatient departments of the institution. This paper describes self check-in for appointments in outpatient setting, describes the distinct management and leadership competencies that would facilitate successful implementation of the self check-in project as well as its rationale.

According to Meads (2006), health institutions in many parts of the world have introduced computerized self check-in systems for their outpatient customers whereby the patient reporting for check-up confirms and subsequently validates the correctness that the institution has on them.

Meads (2006) further adds that self check-in can also be done manually in the developing countries incapable of introducing such computerized systems. In manual self check-in, the patient reporting for medical check-up writes down the required information such as name, sex, and age and then proceeds for check-up.

The implementation of a self check-in system either computerized or manual requires specific management and leadership competencies. In laymans terms, competencies are skills and behaviors of an effective leader or manager. According to Laureate Education Inc (2012), " Leadership is all about creating change, and it involves establishing direction, aligning people

toward that direction, and also establishing change through connecting with people" (p. 1). In regard to leadership competencies necessary for the implementation of a self check-in for appointments in outpatient setting, a leader ought to have the capacity or ability to ensure the creation of constructive relationships between all stakeholders (Zaleznik, 2004). Zaleznik (2004) also notes that he or she should also be able to offer support and collaborate with all stakeholders in the recognition of the problem, in this case long queues, and in creation of plans of action aimed at alleviating the problem, i. e. the implementation of self check-in systems for appointment of outpatients. To identify a problem, some of the skills necessary include listening skills, critical thinking, and persuasion skills. Implementation of change requires the leader to have specific competencies such as coordination skills, ability to involve all stakeholders in the decision making process and as well consider their views, and ability to monitor change (Hill and Lineback, 2011).

Laureate Education Inc (2012) also brings forward the fact that " Management is very different in that it is really about understanding complexity and creating order, and doing so by controlling your operations, and problem solving, and using resources" (p. 1). In other words, one of the major management competencies necessary for introduction of a check-in system for outpatients include consistency; second is organization skills (Laureate Education Inc, 2012). Effective organization skills ensures early planning particularly in terms of financial planning. Additionally, effective organization and planning ensures that individuals with relevant skills, knowledge, and qualifications are identified and included in the team to

implement the change, in this case the introduction of a self check-in system for outpatients (Meads, 2006).

In conclusion, self check-in for appointments for outpatient settings is important in the provision of quality care as it helps prevent the possibility of patients waiting to be checked-in in long queues. Leadership competencies necessary for implementation of such a system include ability to identify the need for change, and aligning stakeholders with the need for change.

Management competencies include consistency, organization skills, and planning skills.

References

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