

## Sentara Medical Group

Profitably optimizing patients' experience

Sentara Medical Group (SMG) is one of the most progressive and integrated health care organizations in the USA, and their Medical Group brings together more than 720 primary care physicians and specialists (90+ clinics), providing dedicated physician coverage and high-quality medical services. The Group was looking for ways to increase performance of the practices, allowing for better capacity utilization and increased patient satisfaction to deal with the ever increasing demand for services.

I am happy to report that Renoir's SCOPE program has improved our patient flow, reduced wait times, improved staff comradery, and shortened our work hours.

*Dr. Kathleen Tylman, PPL, KM*

### Key Results

On track to achieve \$10-20 million in benefits from opportunities identified

326% improvement in 1<sup>st</sup> appointment on-time performance

33% reduction in lobby wait time

68% reduction in 1<sup>st</sup> appointment average exam delay

28% reduction in patient throughput

102% improvement in overall on-time performance

55% reduction in overall average exam delay

36% improvement in compliance to AVS printing

### ANALYSIS:

Renoir's initial survey of SMG's operations identified the following:

- Structured management tools - data driven KPIs, short interval control rounding, variation analysis, action logs, performance reviews - were largely missing
- Significant overlap of responsibilities and accountability throughout the process
- Communication between the Group and the practices was ineffective and not structured
- The flexibility of staff varied greatly between practices
- Resource: Workload allocation was inconsistent between like practices
- The 'management' aspects of running practices was done in a mostly reactive manner
- Patient slots in same type practices varied
- There were noteworthy differences in how waiting times were managed and how patients were assisted, between practices

### PROJECT APPROACH:

Following the Analysis and an RFP process, Renoir agreed to commit to the following:

- Standardize management control systems across clinics and "suit to fit" work/time relationships
- Standardize work processes, e.g. checking in and rooming
- Develop a daily/weekly/monthly operating report to highlight individual clinic/physician performance
- Improve Short Interval Control rounding to focus on standard work times
- Increase patient visits by improving physician productivity
- Implement a governance model to create a continuous improvement culture
- Resource load clinics based on
- Develop overtime control to minimize costs
- Create better delegation and clarity of roles and responsibilities
- Standardize referral management and review process
- Increased performance of practices allowing for better capacity utilization and increased patient throughput - targeted 5%
- \$4.5M of extra revenue per annum
- Productivity improvement as a result of data driven management control practices to reduce operational costs.

### World Leaders in Sustainable Change

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“SCOPE is preparing the Medical Group for the Affordable Care Act, increasing the number of patients that we’re able to see, and improving patient satisfaction.”

**Marc Glickman, MD. Clinical Chief – Sentara Vascular Surgery Specialists**

“In the broadest sense, this project is about teaching us to be more effective in what we do, in the process of delivering high quality care.”

**Terry Gilliland, MD. Chief Medical Officer Sentara Healthcare**

To drive the Project, Renoir and Sentara created the internally branded “SCOPE” project. A full-time team of 3 client “Task Force” members, 3 Renoir consultants and a full time, dedicated Renoir Senior Project Manager, to oversee all initiatives, was formed.

Two Management Action Teams (MATs) were established to provide a feedback loop for process changes and ensure data credibility. The Primary/Specialty MAT (PS MAT) provided open dialogue among physician champions, senior leadership, clinical support personnel and the client Task Force to discuss processes identified at the site level, applicable Key Performance Indicators to gauge improvement, and desired targets for the clinics to achieve. This included extensive mapping of existing clinic-level processes (patient check-in, clinical rooming, etc.) as well as analysis and critiques of the organization’s management control systems. The Evaluation MAT supported PS MAT’s decisions by addressing data capability queries as well as resolving data credibility concerns.

### PROJECT OUTCOMES

Active engagement within MATs allowed the client’s own leadership to understand the underlying concerns with the management control systems’ variations, across different clinics, and through critique sessions, identify a model consistent with the their executive leadership’s vision.

A thorough 15-week Focus Process™ allowed the Task Force, with guidance from Renoir’s team, to identify 41 Best Practices prevalent among the SMG’s selected, best operationally performing clinics. These Best Practices focused on site-level processes and individuals’ responsibilities to ensure that the complexities of each patient, in both primary and specialty care clinics, received the best quality of service, in the most predictable manner possible. The initial target for all sites was to achieve a 15% reduction in the total patient throughput time.

### OPPORTUNITIES IDENTIFIED:

#### 1. Enhanced patient access

- Visit volume net revenue opportunity for ALL (90+) clinics in the range of \$18M to \$25M (based on increasing daily visits for Prim/Spec and/or Primary Care.)

#### 2. Staffing matched to volume

- Appropriate staffing ratio cost savings opportunity for ALL (90+) clinics in the range of \$1.5M - \$3M.

#### 3. Referrals

- Redirecting external referrals to internal one, \$2.5M

#### 4. Cost avoidance

- Through improved efficiencies, open staffing positions were closed, realizing a benefit of approximately \$450K

#### 5. Co-pay collection

- Improve reporting and workflow around collections of co-pays.

### KEY INITIATIVES:

#### Access to Care

Secretaries’ and scheduling coordinators’ workflows were adapted to place explicit emphasis on a standardized checklist for scheduling patient appointments. This “every patient, every time” mentality, combined with

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"I had a patient today jokingly acknowledge that her blood pressure would be too high when I checked her vitals, because she wasn't used to me coming into the exam room within 2 minutes of being checked in."

**Louis Croteau, MD.**  
**Vice Chair, Sentara Medical Group Board of Directors**

## THE RENOIR GROUP

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enforcement of existing minimum provider-patient weekly contact hours, reduced variability in daily slot availability.

### **Staffing Rationalization and flexing**

Benchmarks were used to identify appropriate staffing levels, based on volume and RVU's. In many cases, clinics were over staffed, based on the volume and productivity of the Providers. Flexing rules were also written and implemented across all clinics.

### **Patient Satisfaction**

By far the most critical factors for the SCOPE project were a reduction in Lobby Wait Time and a stricter adherence to Appointment On-Time Starts. LPNs and MAs were held accountable for proactive monitoring of patient arrival schedules, through site-level managers' utilization of a "daily weekly operating report" (DWOR). With support from Renoir, SMG's Performance Optimization team was able to develop this tool, providing site-level transparency of the patient flow.

### **Physician Satisfaction**

Deconstructing the "silo" approach to pod staff responsibilities at multi-provider clinics, increased staff availability to their providers' needs. Systematic patient tracking afforded clarity to pod staff, providers and front desk personnel, as to where each patient was within the patient flow. A formalized communication process for late providers, allowed secretaries to predictively adjust patient expectations before delays occurred.

### **Overtime Reduction**

Matching daily patient volume, with appropriate levels of staffing, while expanding flexibility in the staffing float pool, greatly reduced site-level overtime costs.

### **Performance Management**

The development of a performance management report, in the form of the DWOR, was instrumental for the client to shift to a culture of accountability, changing the mind set to an action oriented operation. Weekly performance reviews were established at all clinics, with involvement of key staff and Providers, focused on addressing variances to the plan.

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