



Parkland

Photo by Anna Duncan

Neurology Clinic

Unit Manager: Charlotte Richard, RN

Medical Director: Jessica Lee, MD

HISTORY

For several years, patients who needed to access Parkland's Neurology Clinic faced wait times up to several months. For a new patient, the wait averaged at least six months and at times, closer to nine months.

EFFECTING CHANGE

Several changes have been initiated in an attempt to improve patient access to the Parkland Neurology Clinic.

Cynthia Tome, PA-C joined the Neurology team in May 2009. After briefly training with the Neurology residents and the Medical Director, she began seeing patients independently. Initially, this added at least 10 new patient appointment slots each week. Over time, Cynthia has expanded her panel and is now scheduling three new patients and seven follow up patients, daily.

Internal Medicine residents began in July and see patients in the Neurology Clinic every Tuesday and Thursday morning. Panels for Neurology residents have been altered to accommodate more new patients. The panels were also tweaked so that new and follow-up appointments were spread throughout each day in a way that optimized dwell times and throughput. Overall, the clinic is now meeting seven, half-days each week. This is up from a previous total of five, half-days each week.

Following a written protocol refined by Dr. Jessica Lee, she and Dr. Steven Vernino took on a back log of referrals and improved the referral workflow.

REALIZING RESULTS and GOING FORWARD

Following the implementation of these changes, the wait time for a new patient to be seen in the Parkland Neurology Clinic has been reduced to approximately 30 days.

During recent space planning for the new Parkland hospital (opening in 2014), Dr. Lee identified several goals aimed at continually increasing access to the Neurology Clinic. The expectation is that by 2014, the clinic will be meeting at least seven, half-days each week and booking approximately 40 patients into each half-day session. This amounts to increased access of about 30 percent when compared to current state.

CONCLUSION

Several positive initiatives were brought into play, each fitting together to make this one of the more successful ventures in clinic structure remodeling. The revision of the referral process especially is evidence of Dr. Lee's deep personal interest in the success of the Neurology Clinic at Parkland.