

# METROHEALTH INCREASES ACCESS TO CARE WITH CONSUMER-CENTRIC SCHEDULING

To fulfill its mission to care for the community, MetroHealth embarked on the MyMetro initiative, a systemwide effort focused on improving access to care and the consumer experience. MetroHealth sought to simplify the scheduling experience for consumers while ensuring that they see the right provider, at the right location and right time, while using their resources efficiently and effectively.

## CHALLENGE

MetroHealth, a safety net hospital, recognized that the existing care access infrastructure and scheduling processes did not align to consumer expectations. Consumers want short wait times for an appointment and quick responses to phone inquiries, and they lacked a consistent scheduling experience that connected them with available providers at the most convenient location.

“We needed help fleshing out our vision of access. Huron helped us execute on our vision by creating a strategy, implementing it in pilot areas, and rolling it out across the system with their tools.

**JENNIFER ESPOSITO**, SENIOR DIRECTOR OF ACCESS

## APPROACH

MetroHealth improved the consumer experience by collaborating with Huron to standardize and optimize processes and technology across the access continuum.

The new care access solution was rolled out in three areas: primary care and two specialties – rheumatology, and hand and upper extremity. To do so they:

- **Assessed current state.** Identified gaps in existing functional and technical environments to clearly identify the changes needed to achieve the desired scheduling experience.

## RESULTS

**21%** decrease in no-shows at targeted rheumatology clinic.

Decrease in new patient scheduling lag.

**500** fewer blocked slots within **14** days of the appointment, per week, across all primary care adult providers.

- **Created a foundation for change.** Established and shared a strategic vision for access that was communicated to stakeholders across the system, including providers.
- **Identified physician champions.** Selected physicians to serve as advocates for change within and across specialties. They served as collaborators with the functional and technical design teams assisting in decision making about the new processes and ensuring buy-in from other physicians.
- **Increased provider availability.** Reduced the number of visit types and appointment durations to increase standardization of provider scheduling templates. Implemented a data-driven approach to selecting the appropriate provider scheduling template, increasing the number of appointment time slots.

- **Designed, tested and implemented a centralized scheduling process.** Leveraged optimized scheduling questionnaires and provider templates to schedule the right patient, with the right provider at the right time.
- **Implemented strategic overbooking.** Mitigated losses from no shows by allowing designated schedulers to leverage overbook slots.
- **Centralized consumer inquiries.** Ensured that calls from consumers are responded to in a timely fashion by developing a new phone tree structure with one central access point.
- **Implemented a care access reporting tool.** Provided a holistic picture of scheduling to ensure accountability to the changes using Huron's proprietary tool. Data from disparate technologies continues to be aggregated so leadership can review access across services lines and the organization.
- **Equipped MetroHealth for continued success.** Developed a detailed playbook for the rollout of MyMetro across the entire system.

## **ABOUT METROHEALTH**

MetroHealth is a public safety net health system committed to providing health care to residents of Cuyahoga County, Ohio, and improving the health of the community overall. MetroHealth delivers care during more than 1.4 million patient visits in its hospital and health centers annually.



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