

Tips to Reduce No Shows at Your Clinic

No-shows at a clinic are problematic because they waste valuable appointment slots, disrupt the clinic's schedule, potentially delay care for other patients needing appointments, and can lead to financial losses due to unfilled time that could have been used for billable services; essentially impacting the overall efficiency and effectiveness of the clinic operation. There are a number of strategies your clinic can put in place to help reduce your no-show rate.

HAVE CLEAR CANCELLATION POLICIES:

Develop policies and explain the proper protocol for canceling or rescheduling appointments, including providing adequate notice to allow for other patients to be accommodated.

DISCUSS TRANSPORTATION PLANNING:

Discuss strategies with your patients to ensure reliable transportation to appointments, coordinating rides, or utilizing public transportation options. Medicaid members can receive rides at no charge to health care appointments through MTM, a non-emergency transportation company.

ADDRESS BARRIERS:

Proactively identify potential barriers to attending appointments, like childcare needs or work schedules, and discuss solutions to overcome them.

CREATE A RESPECTFUL CLINIC CULTURE:

A survey of adult patients by the NIH found that many patients did not show up for appointments because they felt disrespected by the health care system. Being sensitive to patient's needs and staff training around respect and cultural sensitivity are important in reducing no-shows.

Putting strategies in place at your clinic can help you reduce your no-show rate. Please see below strategies your clinic can implement to successfully reduce no-shows.

1. Provide a handout with key information about appointment scheduling and cancellation policies.
2. Waiting room displays: Use posters or digital screens in the waiting area to reinforce the importance of keeping appointments.
3. During check-in, verbally remind patients about the importance of attending appointments and following cancellation procedures.
4. Utilize online patient portals to send appointment reminders and allow for self-scheduling.
5. Add something on the provider portal that discusses ways to reduce no-shows.
6. Educate your staff and providers on ways to reduce no-shows.
7. Collaborate with referral sources such as providing transportation resources.
8. Implement strategies to reduce wait times.
9. Make reminder calls to patients.
10. Send text reminders to patients.
11. Look for ways to create a welcoming and respectful environment.