Ten Minute Bites to Help Others Understand

Key messages when talking with the rest of the team back at the clinic:

- Goal is to optimize primary care service delivery.
- There is a gap between current performance and possibility.
- It is possible to close that gap
- There have been many attempts, which often fail for a variety of reasons usually because of a failure to understand the basic dynamics of "flow."
- In flow, we match demand for service to supply of service
- In flow systems, the most effective (clinical outcomes) the most efficient (cost-revenue) and the most satisfying systems will match the demand to the supply with as little delay as possible.
- Delays lead to dissatisfaction, higher costs, and lower and sub-optimized revenues.
- If Demand = Supply, then there won't be a wait time.
- We need to match the demand to the supply at the organizational level, at the practice level and at the individual provider level.
- Matching the demand for service with the supply of service at the individual clinician level requires identification of "panel" (patients linked to each clinician) since this is where the work (demand) comes from.
- At the same time we also know that when patients see their own clinician, patient, clinician and staff satisfaction rises, costs go down, revenues rise and clinical care and outcomes improve.
- Therefore, the two critical elements for optimizing primary care delivery are: see your own patients and don't make them wait.
- There is a process and a set of principles that if applied diligently can build systems without waits.
- That process includes:
  o Form a team. The people who do the work must transform the work.
  o Set an aim/goal that focuses on reducing delays.
  o Make changes within the following categories
    ▪ Balancing supply and demand
    ▪ Eliminating backlog
    ▪ Reducing the number of queues
    ▪ Developing and implementing contingency plans for variations
    ▪ Using strategies to reduce demand
    ▪ Using strategies to increase supply
  o Measure to prove that the changes made actually result in improvements.