

Executive Summary

A Focus Group Evaluation Project at Salud Family Health Center in Commerce City, CO

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Salud Family Health Center is a patient centered medical home that provides integrated health care services to low-income and underserved communities in Colorado. Integrated health care team members include, but are not limited to, physicians, nurses, behavioral health specialists, nutritionists, patient health educators and dentists. The purpose of this evaluation was to collect and analyze information from Salud clients regarding their perceptions, knowledge and experiences related to the integrated health care team at the Salud clinic in Commerce City, CO.

Integrated health care team members at the clinic recruited clients to attend one of two focus groups. One of the focus groups was conducted in English (FGE) and the other focus group was conducted in Spanish (FGS). There were interpreters available at both focus group sessions.

After clients provided informed consent, they participated in a 60-90 minute focus group session which was facilitated by a moderator. During the session, the moderator asked the clients several questions regarding their impressions of Salud, their perceptions of the health care team, access and barriers to care, and what could improve their experience with Salud. At the end of the focus group, participants completed a brief demographic questionnaire and received a \$40 gift card. FGE had 6 participants (50% female, 83% Hispanic/Latino) and FGS had 5 participants (80% female, 100% Hispanic/Latino).

After the focus groups were completed, the audio recordings from each group were transcribed. The audio recording for FGE was transcribed word for word and analyzed for themes. The recording from the FGS was translated from Spanish to English through paraphrasing by two separate Spanish speakers; those paraphrased documents were then analyzed for themes. Six evaluators individually read the transcripts multiple times in order to identify common themes. Then, the evaluators met in two subgroups of three to discuss themes in small groups. After the two subgroups met separately, one representative from each subgroup met to confirm the overall themes that emerged during the subgroup discussions. The two subgroups were in 100% agreement regarding all of the emerging themes.

Five themes emerged across both focus groups. The themes were a) relationship with provider, b) knowledge of the health care team, c) wait times, d) communication and e) culture and language.

a) Relationship with Provider: Participants were more likely to have a good patient experience at Salud and ask for help from their provider if they had a good relationship with their provider. FGE participants identified an uncertainty of trust related to frequent changes in staff at Salud. Conversely, FGS participants described positive experiences with members of the health care team and expressed trust in their providers.

b) Knowledge of the Health Care Team: Participants in FGE specifically discussed their lack of understanding regarding health care team members at Salud and confusion about how to get an appointment with health care team members. FGS participants understood who was included in the health care team at Salud.

c) Wait times: Participants in both focus groups expressed dissatisfaction with long wait

times to make appointments, long wait times during appointments (both in the waiting room and exam room), and long wait times at the convenient care clinic.

d) Communication: Both FGE and FGS participants stated telephone communication could be difficult at times. Challenges included being on hold for extended periods of time and being subjected to numerous transfers for various reasons, including locating an interpreter.

e) Culture and Language: Participants in both focus groups expressed that their culture and/or language was not a barrier to receiving health care at Salud. Participants indicated that interpreters were readily provided by Salud.

Based on the results of this evaluation project, the evaluation team recommends that Salud increase visibility of integrated health care team members through in-person education, educational brochures and the online patient portal to enhance familiarity and trust between the client and health care team members. Furthermore, Salud should develop and implement strategies to decrease client wait times, on the telephone and during appointments. Finally, Salud should explore options to enhance telephonic communication with clients.