

## **Improving Colon Cancer Screening and Detection**

### **Park Nicollet Health Services**

### **2001 Acclaim Award Honoree**

The Colon Cancer Screening project was initiated when data from a system-wide preventive services initiative (for which [Park Nicollet won the 1999 Acclaim Award](#)) showed that despite significant increases in immunizations and screening for other services, the percent of patients screened for colorectal cancer remained essentially unchanged from 1995 to 1997. Analysis revealed that demand for screenings exceeded capacity. In order to meet demand, the organization began a fast track flexible sigmoidoscopy clinic and in 2000 opened a Regional Flex Center at the main clinic.

### **Goal**

To improve the percent of primary care patients with appropriate colon cancer screening from 56% to 79% by December 31, 2000.

### **Intervention**

Patient education; training additional providers on flexible sigmoidoscopy; created a new flex center; visit planning process that reminds patients and providers of what preventive services need to be scheduled

### **Highlights**

- Colon Cancer Screening was a focus under Preventive Services which was selected as one of eight care improvement projects targeted by the clinic; CEO and other top leaders meet monthly to discuss progress and remove barriers
- 34 primary care physicians and technicians were trained in the use of state-of-the-art equipment and new procedures
- Decreased the reschedule rate for screening after comparing three colon preparation processes and selecting a method that improved patient tolerance and the quality of the preparation
- Clinicians can seek information on current drug recommendations for specific conditions and complete the order with a mouse click.
- Flex center open in the evenings and on weekends to increase access and convenience
- Two brochures were developed to help patients understand when they needed to have preventive services including screening for colon cancer, and another one developed specific for colon cancer screening which outlined the three most common tests as well as helping the patient to determine their risk for colon cancer.

### **Results**

- Colon cancer screening rates increase from 57% in 1997 to 75% in 2000
- Wait time for flex appointments was reduced from 35 days to less than 2 weeks

*Park Nicollet Health Services is an integrated care system that includes Methodist Hospital, Park Nicollet Clinic, Park Nicollet Foundation, Park Nicollet Institute with more than 2,500 employees, including over 530 physicians and 260 clinical professionals on staff at 24 clinics throughout the Twin Cities.*