

CLINICAL INITIATIVES

Multiple initiatives have been proposed to address: clinical services; the quality of patient care; faculty practice plans, including consideration of joint and/or multi-professional practice plans across schools; and joint department chair appointments to integrate complementary schools and their clinical practices more efficiently. A few of these are described below. Other initiatives will be developed to address these goals during the five-year time period of the strategic plan, responding to the rapidly changing health care environment.

Patient Access Initiatives

To improve ambulatory access, enhance productivity, increase revenue, and respond to increasing financial pressures, the current structure, operation, and performance of the faculty practices are being thoroughly assessed. The objective is to design operational changes, including referrals, scheduling, clinic workflows, care team roles and responsibilities, clinic organization, and leadership and management processes needed to improve access, productivity, and revenue. The design of the associated policies, processes, roles and responsibilities, skill assessments, organization design, and information technology enablers of practices will be examined. The goals are to increase the patient base, address reimbursement pressures creating the need to render care more efficiently, minimize patient dissatisfaction, reduce cancellations associated with scheduling policies, stem referral leakage from the practice, and improve access to physician care. These efforts to increase access and reduce cost and resource intensity for providing ambulatory services must also occur while maintaining high quality and continuity of care.

An assessment of the Robert Wood Johnson Medical Group (RWJMG) is underway. RWJMS has retained a consulting firm to perform an assessment and assist with implementing changes in business practices. After completion of the initial assessment phase, a preliminary plan will be developed including findings, benchmark status, and recommendations. The improvement plan will include a program management plan, with a design and implementation strategy addressing recommended operational changes. The plan will also include a critically important methodology for tracking progress and impact from associated changes.

The assessment phase of the RWJMG project is nearing completion. Moving forward, the project will enter an implementation phase when recommended changes will be operationalized in close consultation with clinical faculty and school administration. This will include reorganization of the practice structure, empowerment and accountability of chairs for practice performance, development of a new call management and patient scheduling system to decrease new patient appointment lag time, and greater ambulatory practice room utilization.

Assessment of the faculty practices associated with the New Jersey Medical School is planned for the future.

In addition, to further oral health throughout the state, a review of existing clinical programs will be made and assessed relative to the need in strategic New Jersey markets. Initiatives will be developed to address opportunities that present themselves. Emphasis will be placed on enhancing the school's faculty practice, Rutgers University Dental Association, and augmenting the school's extramural service-based service-learning clinics. Particular attention will be paid to developing service areas that allow the leveraging of other RBHS clinical activities with the ultimate goal of providing comprehensive care to RBHS patients.