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Improving Access to Care at Amherstburg Family Health Team

- **Organization:** Amherstburg Family Health Team**,** www.afht.ca
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Overview

The Amherstburg Family Health Team (AFHT) recognized that **access to primary care is a persistent challenge**, especially highlighted during the COVID-19 pandemic. In response, AFHT **collaborated closely with patients to develop access methods tailored to their needs,** including an After-Hours physician line operating four evenings per week. As the pandemic subsided, the team realized the importance of frequently reviewing data on patient demand and shifting between virtual and in-person care. To support this, AFHT developed an Access Dashboard, which evolved to encompass all aspects of physician access, including where patients seek care (e.g., ER, outside use), third next available appointments (virtual and in-office), and reasons for urgent appointments. The dashboard integrates quantitative EMR data and qualitative patient satisfaction survey results, empowering physicians to adjust their practices in line with patient needs and preferences. The overarching goal is to continually refine access to care based on patient feedback and data.

Key Elements of Initiative

Objective:

- Ensure AFHT patients can obtain necessary healthcare services when and how they need them.

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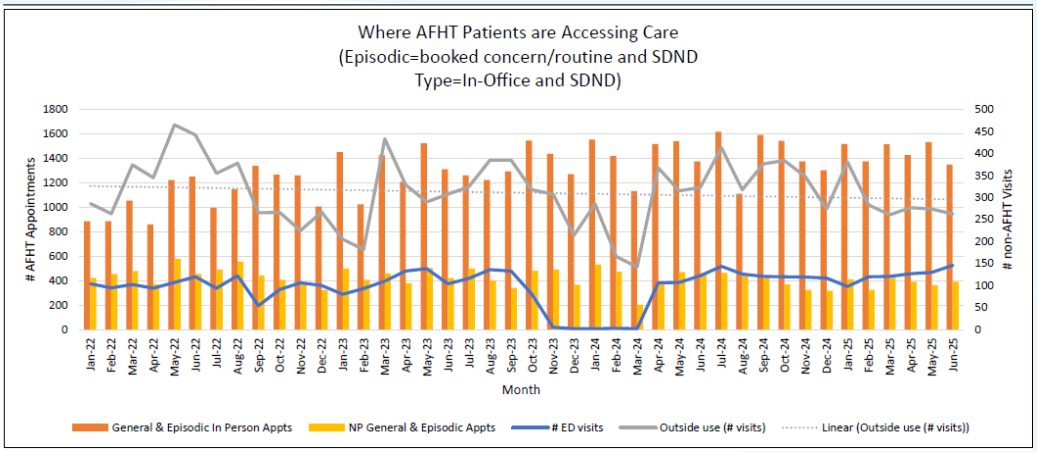
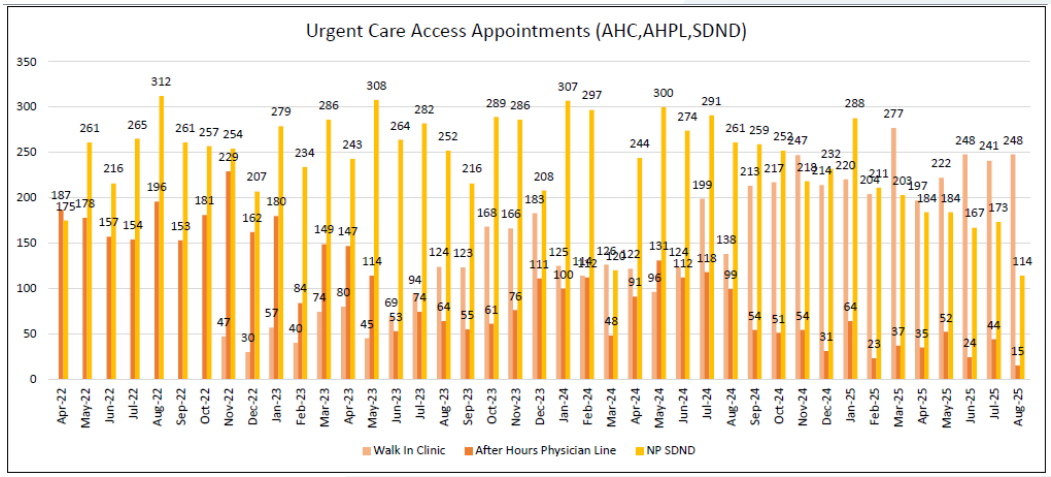
Change Ideas Tested or Implemented

- **Access Dashboard –** Provide the physicians with an access dashboard to gain insight into patient access demand and AFHT supply. Using longitudinal data to analyze trends and accommodate access accordingly.



- Analyzing trends with outside use and ER visits and increasing same day and after-hours access at the same time in consecutive years.



- Analyzing patient demand for after hours access method (After Hours Physician Line, Same Day/Next Day appointments, After Hours Clinic). Transitioning the After Hours Physician line to in-person after hours clinic.

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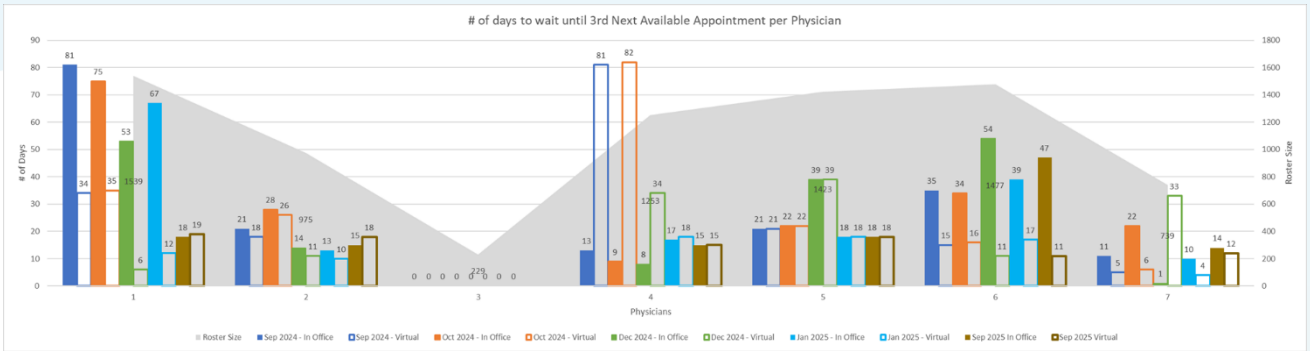
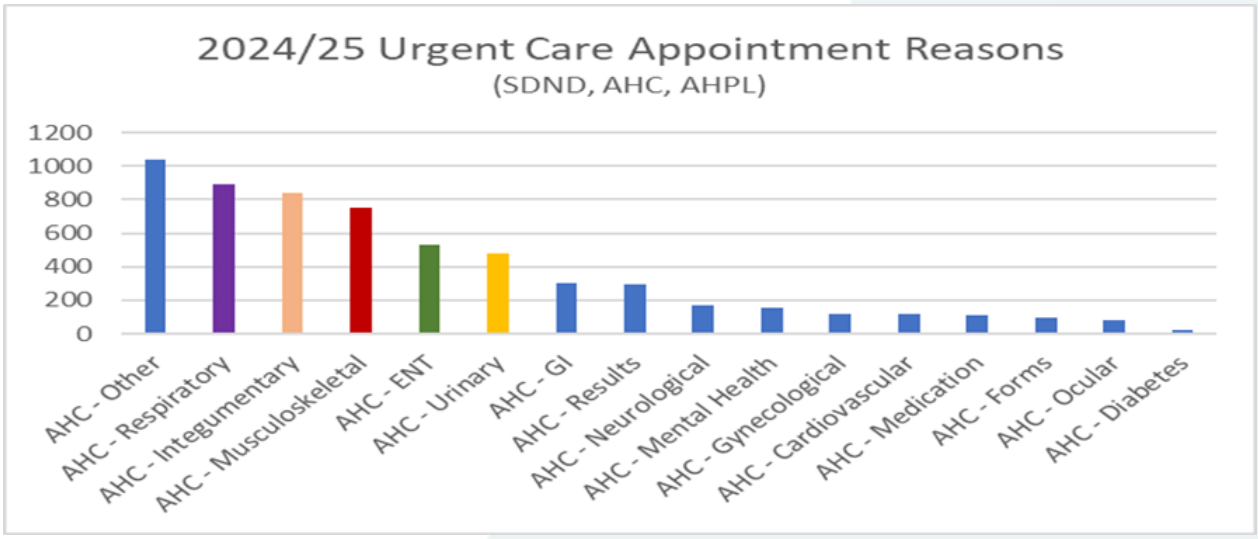
- Analyzing 3rd next available appointment data for in-person and virtual appointments and relation to roster size. Facilitate discussion amongst providers with similar roster sizes as well as inquiry into practice routines and work flow for physicians with low wait times.



- **Patient Perception:** Identifying the top reasons for appointments requiring same day/next day or after-hours access. Increasing efficiencies within the workflows of those appointments.



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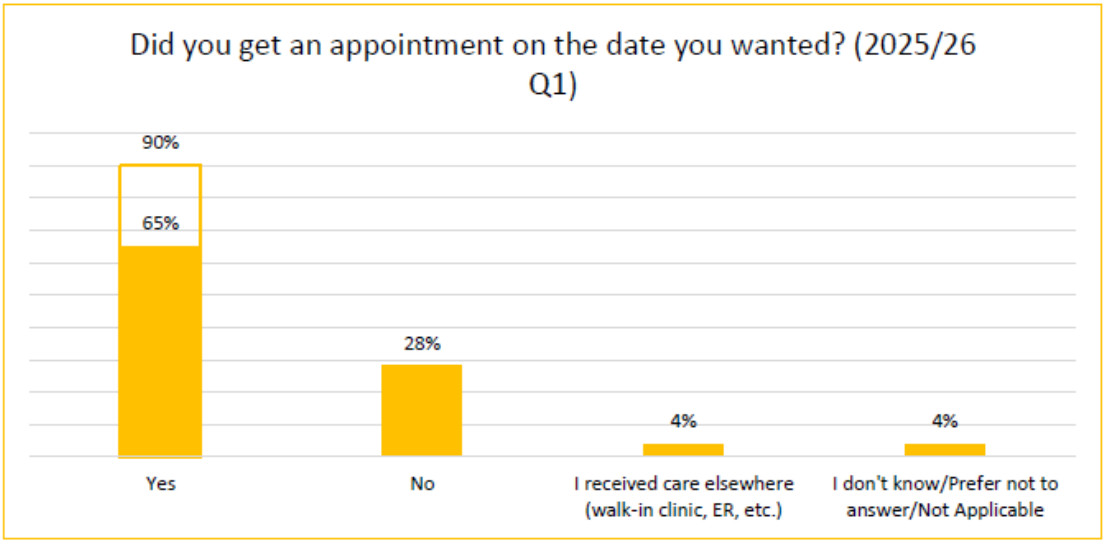
- Understanding patient need and preference and adjusting access according to patient feedback.



Team Members Involved

- AFHT QIP Committee, including representatives from each department (physician, NP, reception, IHP, etc.).
- All team members participated in Plan-Do-Study-Act cycles.

Target Population

- Patients requiring same day/next day or after-hours access.

Measurement Progress

- Tracked trends in outside use and third next available appointment wait times.
- Monitored percentage of urgent appointments labeled with appropriate reasons.

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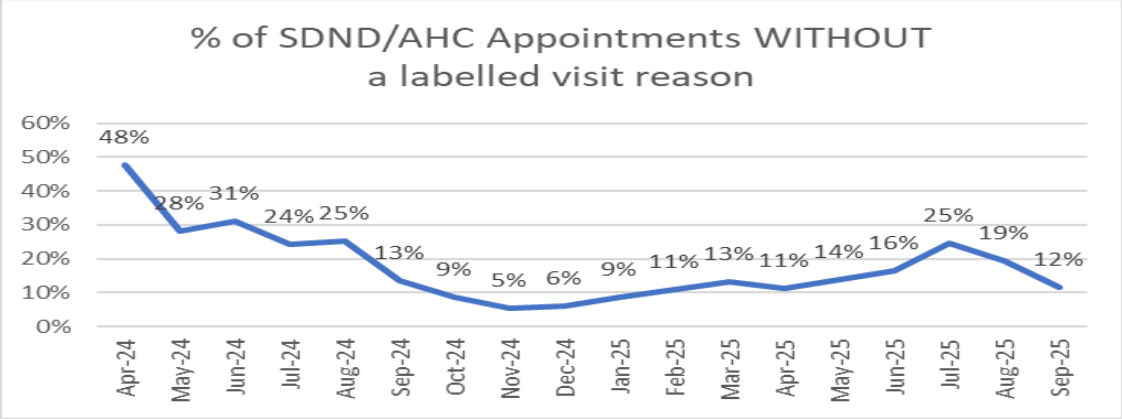
Implementation Experience: Successes & Challenges

Early Successes and Wins

- Early on we realized that these appointments were not being labelled correctly and there was a lack of standardization to gather accurate data on these visits. We developed a standardized method in labelling these appointments and education provided to all team members. An early win was the ability to gather accurate data on our top 5 reasons for urgent care visits to confidently pursue them in conducting GEMBAs and other quality improvement activities that require committed time and effort.



Enablers of Success

- Diverse QIP committee membership brought multiple perspectives to the initiative.
- Physician involvement ensured dashboard data was relevant and actionable.

Challenges and Solutions

- Difficulty sharing the physician dashboard regularly due to scheduling conflicts; addressed by sharing via email when necessary.
- Initial lack of standardization in appointment labeling; resolved through education and process changes.

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Advice for Other Teams

- Involve physicians in dashboard/tool development to ensure data being collected is relevant to their practice.
- Verify data accuracy before investing in deeper analysis.
- Add targeted questions to patient satisfaction surveys to align with the quality improvement initiative you are focusing on for that year to better understand the patient perspective.

Future Steps & Sustainability

Next Steps

- Next phase involves deeper analysis of top urgent care visit reasons to improve efficiency, flow, and provider collaboration.
- Aim to increase access through targeted improvements in appointment types and workflows.

Embedding into Practice

- Standardized labeling of urgent care appointments is now part of routine workflows.
- Access Dashboard is a standing agenda item at physician meetings.
- Data collection occurs quarterly before QIP meetings.

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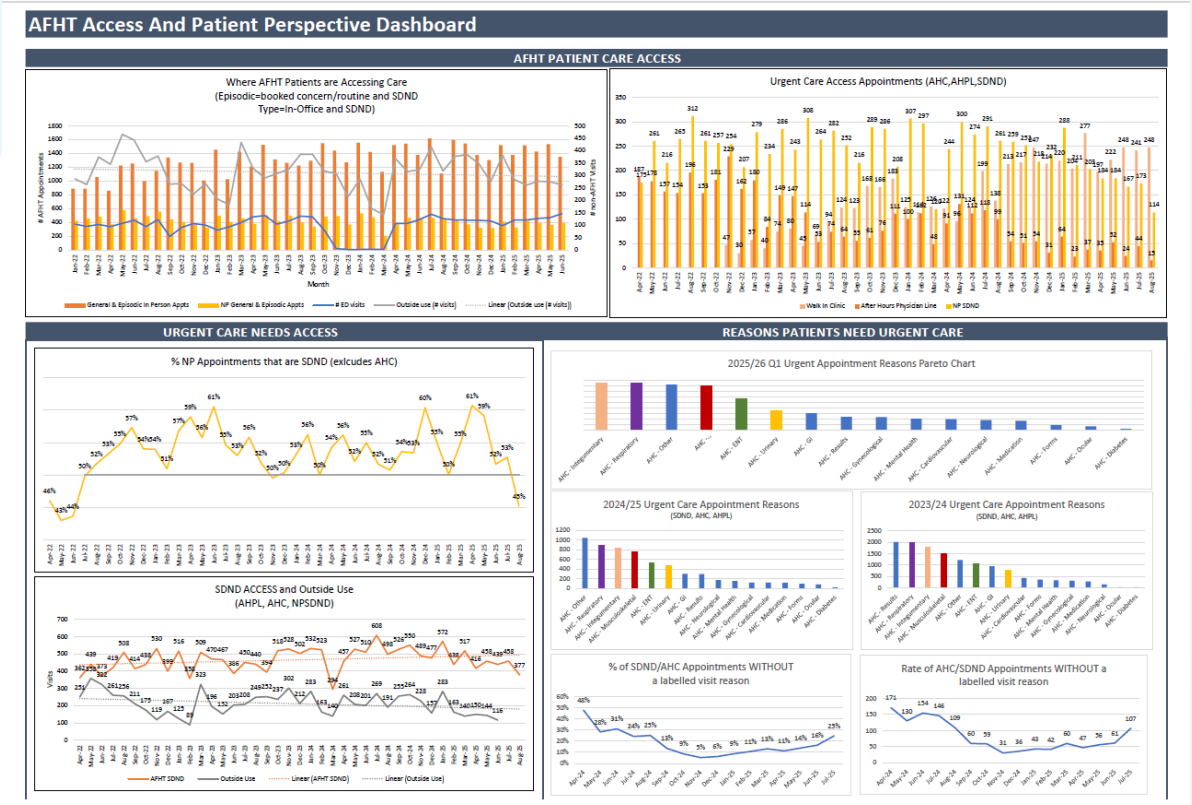
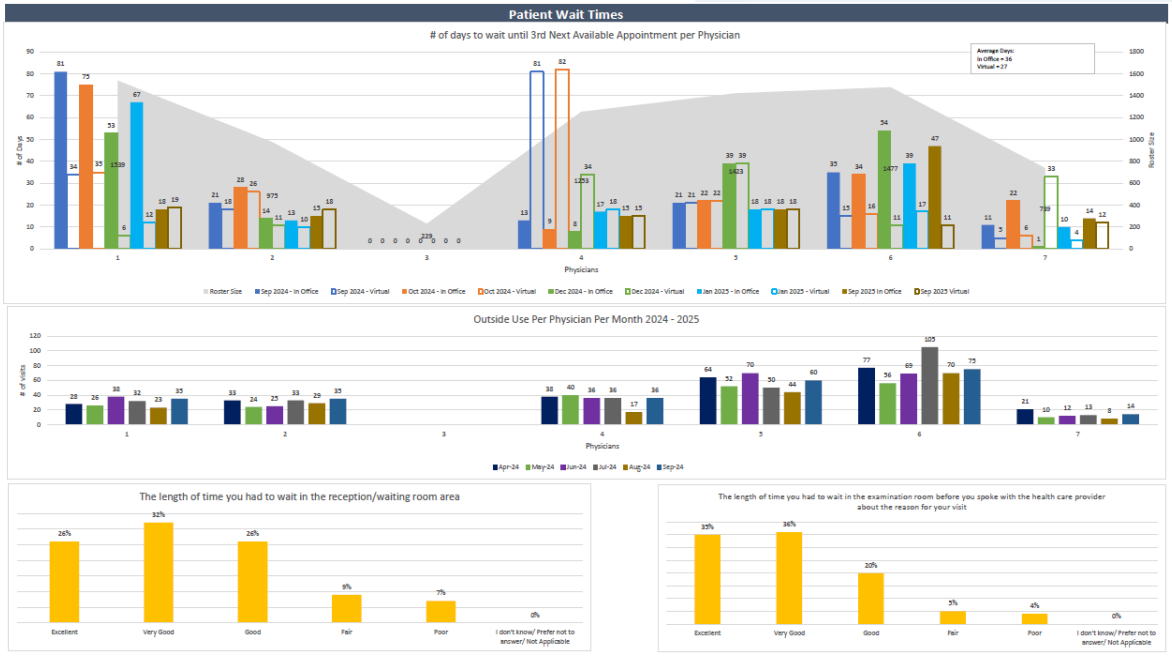
The Data





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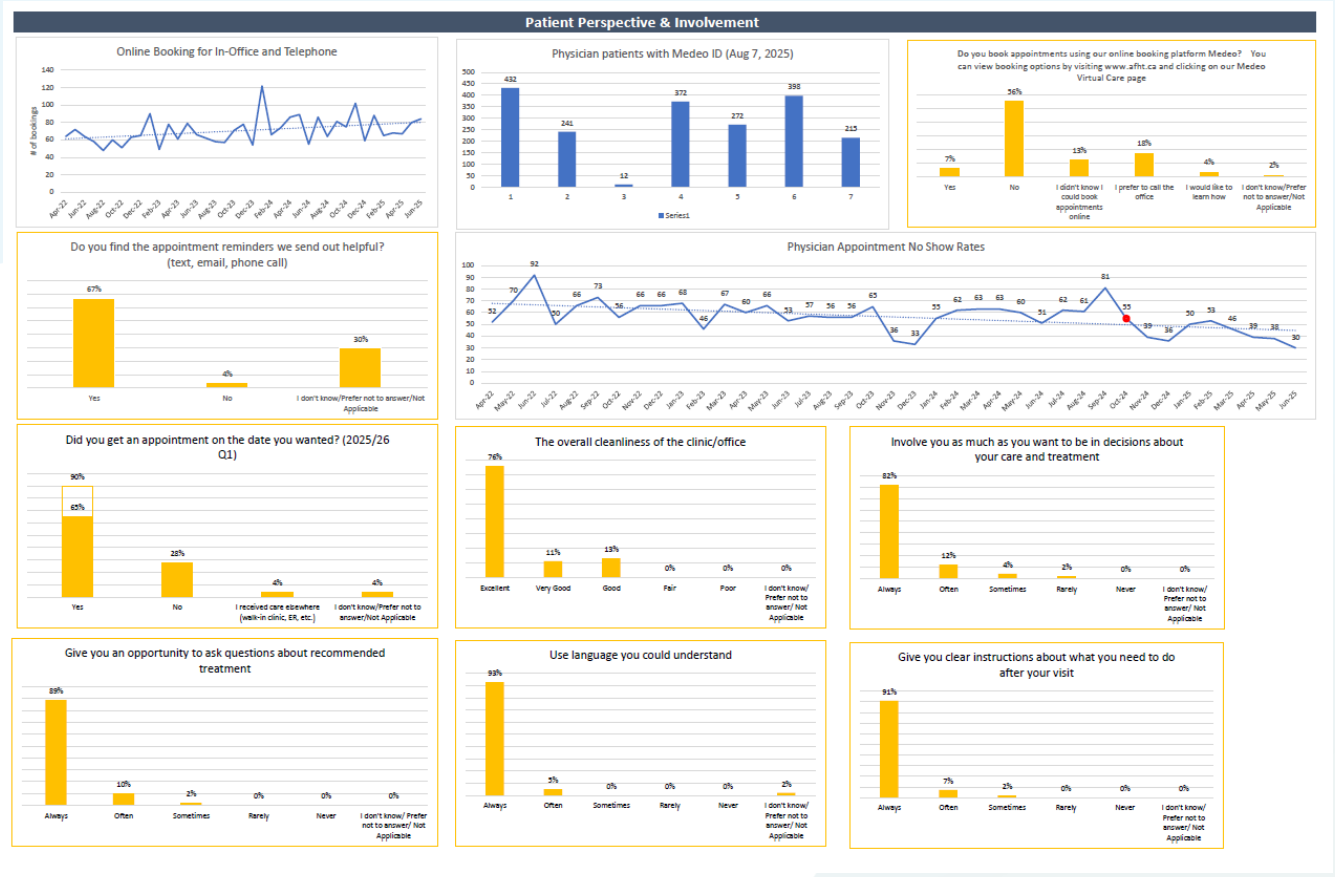

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