# Strengthening Care Continuity to Primary Care Providers at Discharge from the Emergency Department

## Background

- 20-40% of emergency department (ED) visits are unnecessary, leading to long wait times, overstretched resources, higher healthcare costs, and disjointed care<sub>2.7</sub>
- Established relationships with primary care providers (PCPs) are associated with lower morbidity and mortality rates, and fewer urgent healthcare encounters due to proper disease management and routine preventative care<sub>3,4</sub>
- Patients are advised to follow-up with PCP after ED discharge, but many report difficulty obtaining appointment<sub>5.6</sub>
- Literature shows patients who are given a follow-up appointment prior to leaving the ED are highly satisfied with their experience, are likely to attend the appointment, and often continue to engage in primary care going forward<sub>1</sub>

### Purpose

Schedule rapid follow-up appointments during ED discharge process to help link patients to PCPs with in-house clinic and decrease burden on ED

## Aims

- 1. Increase number of scheduled rapid follow-up appointments with in-house primary care clinic at discharge from the ED
- 2. 50% of patients given a rapid follow-up appointment will attend that scheduled appointment
- 3. Decrease in number of patients given a rapid follow-up appointment who return to the ED within 7 days of initial discharge from the ED

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## Methods

**Design:** Quality improvement (QI) project **Sample:** Convenience sample of all patients age 18+ presenting to adult ED between March 24 – April 13, 2021

• Eligible if established with PCP at in-house clinic on admission to ED **Intervention**: Rapid follow-up appointment within 2-7 days of discharge scheduled by ED nurses during discharge process using application within Epic

**Outcome measures:** Collected weekly through Epic report

- Number of patient visits
- Number of eligible patients
- Number of appointments offered
- Number of appointments scheduled
- Number of appointments attended
- Number of patients returning to the ED within 7 days of initial discharge

## Results

### Table 1: Patient Visit Characteristics at Baseline vs. Intervention Period

	Baseline (11/01/2019 – 01/31/2020)	Intervention (03/23/2021 - 04/13/2021)	
Adult Patient Visits Total	12,243	2,426	
<b>GBMC Health Partners</b>	3,359 (27.4%)	506 (20.9%)	
FCA Practice	584 (4.8%)	76 (3.1%)	
FCA Adult Patient Encounter Number	Mean = 1.17, Median = 1	Mean = 1.13, Median = 1	
One	504 (86.3%)	67 (88.2%)	
Two Three	66 (11.3%) 12 (2.0%)	8 (10.5%) 1 (1.3%)	
Four	1 (0.2%)	0 (0.0%)	
Five	1 (0.2%)	0 (0.0%)	
FCA Adult Patient Visit Type Initial			
Return within 7 days	528 (90.4%)	70 (92.1%)	
Return within 30 days	21 (3.6%) 35 (6.0%)	6 (7.9%) N/A	

### Table 2: Outcome Measures by Aim

### Aim One

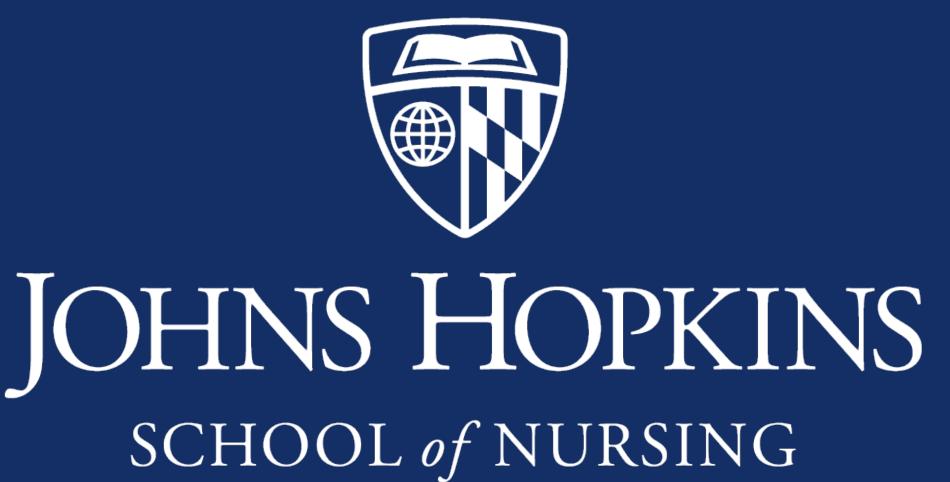
Patients eligible for follow **Appointments offered Appointments scheduled** Aim Two Patients given an appoint Patients attended appoin

### Aim Three

Patients given an appoint return to the ED within Patients not given an app who return to the ED wi

- Less than half of eligible patients were offered a rapid follow-up appointment, and only 13% received an appointment
- 83% of patients who received an appointment attended
- Patients who received an appointment were less likely to return to the ED within 7 days of initial discharge
- **Recommendation:** Focus on retraining ED nurses and promoting adherence to initiative
- Sustainability: Charge nurses to continue reminders and encouragement at daily huddle; process added to Epic training sessions; new DNP student to continue and expand process
- Limitations: Shorter intervention period, baseline data not during same time frame as intervention period

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	Yes	Νο	Chi Squared <i>p</i> -value
w-up	46 (1.9%)	2,380 (98.1%)	p = 0.0000
	11 (23.9%)	35 (76.1%)	<i>p</i> = 0.0004
1	6 (13.0%)	40 (87.0%)	$p = 5.35 \text{ x E}^{-7}$
tment	6 (13.0%)	40 (87.0%)	<i>p</i> = 5.35 x E <sup>-7</sup>
ntment	5 (83.3%)	1 (16.7%)	<i>p</i> = 0.1024
tment who	0 (0.0%)	6 (100.0%)	<i>p</i> = 0.0143
7 days			
pointment	145 (6.0%)	2,275 (94.0%)	p = 0.0000
ithin 7 days			

### Conclusions

### References

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