



DEPARTMENT OF THE AIR FORCE  
HEADQUARTERS AIR FORCE  
WASHINGTON, DC

MEMORANDUM FOR ALMAJCOM/SG

APR 20 2016

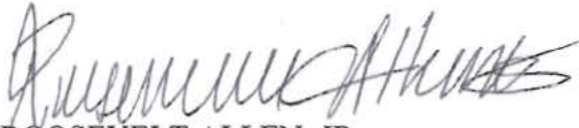
FROM: HQ USAF/SG3/5  
[REDACTED]

SUBJECT: Patient Centered Practice Hours

Recently SG3/5S studied Air Force Medical Service clinic operating hours as a potential indicator of our Patient Centeredness. Current Air Force Instructions provide an operational guideline for patient access during operating hours however policy does not establish normal business hours. A survey of facilities showed the majority of clinics provide appointments Monday-Friday 0800-1540 with closures for lunch and training. Only five facilities provided appointment availability after 1645. Outside of our facilities the healthcare environment is evolving toward patient centered practice hours. A Patient Centered Primary Care Collaborative (PCPCC) survey published in February of 2016 showed patients prioritized access over lower cost with most choosing Urgent Care over a traditional primary care setting because of operating hour convenience. As our patients expectations have evolved, the question we need to ask ourselves is how can we understand and meet our patients' expectations. Trusted Care begins with engaging our patients, defining what they value and making them partners in any changes.

I ask that you engage with MTF Commanders and advocate for increased dialogue with their beneficiaries regarding this subject. We have added a question to the Service Delivery Assessment gauging patient's satisfaction with current local operating hours to assist in this endeavor. Various other tools can assist in collecting feedback from beneficiaries. Leadership can informally query patients in waiting areas, utilize locally produced surveys, social media or Wing forums to identify what patients' value. As facilities develop changes to become more patient centered, I strongly encourage them to include patient representatives in this discussion.

The AF/SG POC is [REDACTED] 703-681-7176, [REDACTED] or via email at [REDACTED]

  
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