
Healthcare Literacy for Linguistic Minorities

in a Federally Qualified Health Center

July 30, 2009



© Jewish Healthcare Foundation
Patient Safety Fellowship



The Team

- Jenan Barghouthi

- University of Pittsburgh, Master of Rehabilitation Counseling (graduate)

- Sarah Janoff

- University of Pittsburgh, Master of Public Health

- Adam Paris

- Chatham University, Doctor of Physical Therapy

- Kate Wilson

- University of Pittsburgh, Master of Health Administration

The Mission of the FQHC*

- *The mission of the FQHC* is to provide patient-driven, high-quality, comprehensive, evidence-based primary and preventive healthcare and social services, with a special concern for patients' religious beliefs, race, national origin, primary language, age, sex, and disability status and without regard for their ability to pay.*

*Name not disclosed to protect privacy



Business Case

- As the United States continues to become more diverse, healthcare organizations need to accommodate the growing number of non-English speaking patients by improving health literacy efforts
 - 22+ million people speak English less than ‘very well’
 - 34+ million people were born in another country
 - 95+ million people have literacy levels below what they need to understand even basic written health information, such as how often to take medication
 - The Joint Commission has targeted communication as a critical element of patient safety and quality of care

Proposed Goals

- Focus on patient education and health literacy
 - Examine effectiveness of the process with non-English speaking patients
 - Identify areas where language and cultural barriers interfere with providing optimal care

Description of Data Gathering

- Observations of
 - Clinical interactions
 - Waiting room and front desk procedures
- Discussion of visit with patients
 - Difficult to complete
- Discussion with staff regarding perspective of patient care, communication and cultural barriers and any proposed future plans
- Review of materials

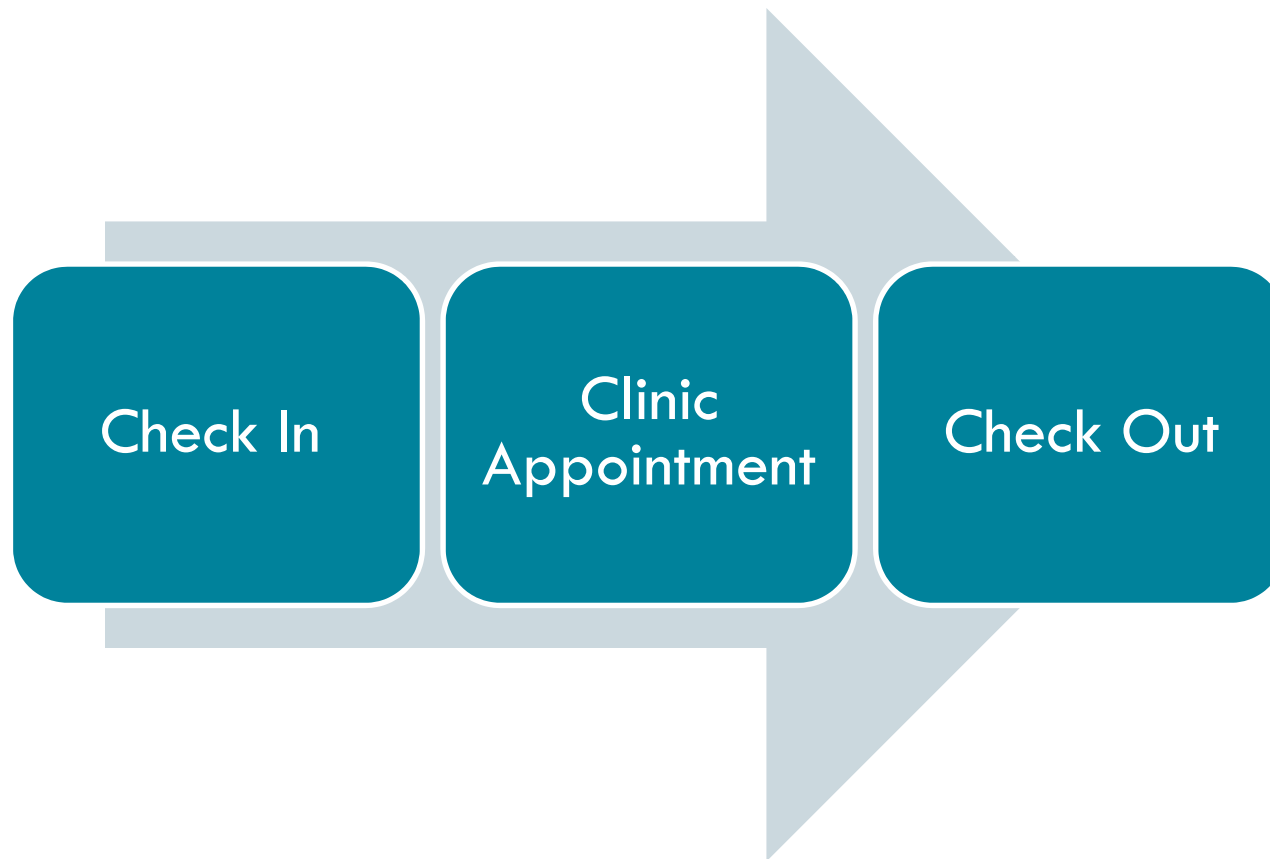
Current Condition

- 22% of all patients' native language was not English
- Top three non-English languages were
 - Spanish (37%)
 - Russian (16%)
 - Hebrew (12%)
- New OB/GYN services
- Several employees are bilingual

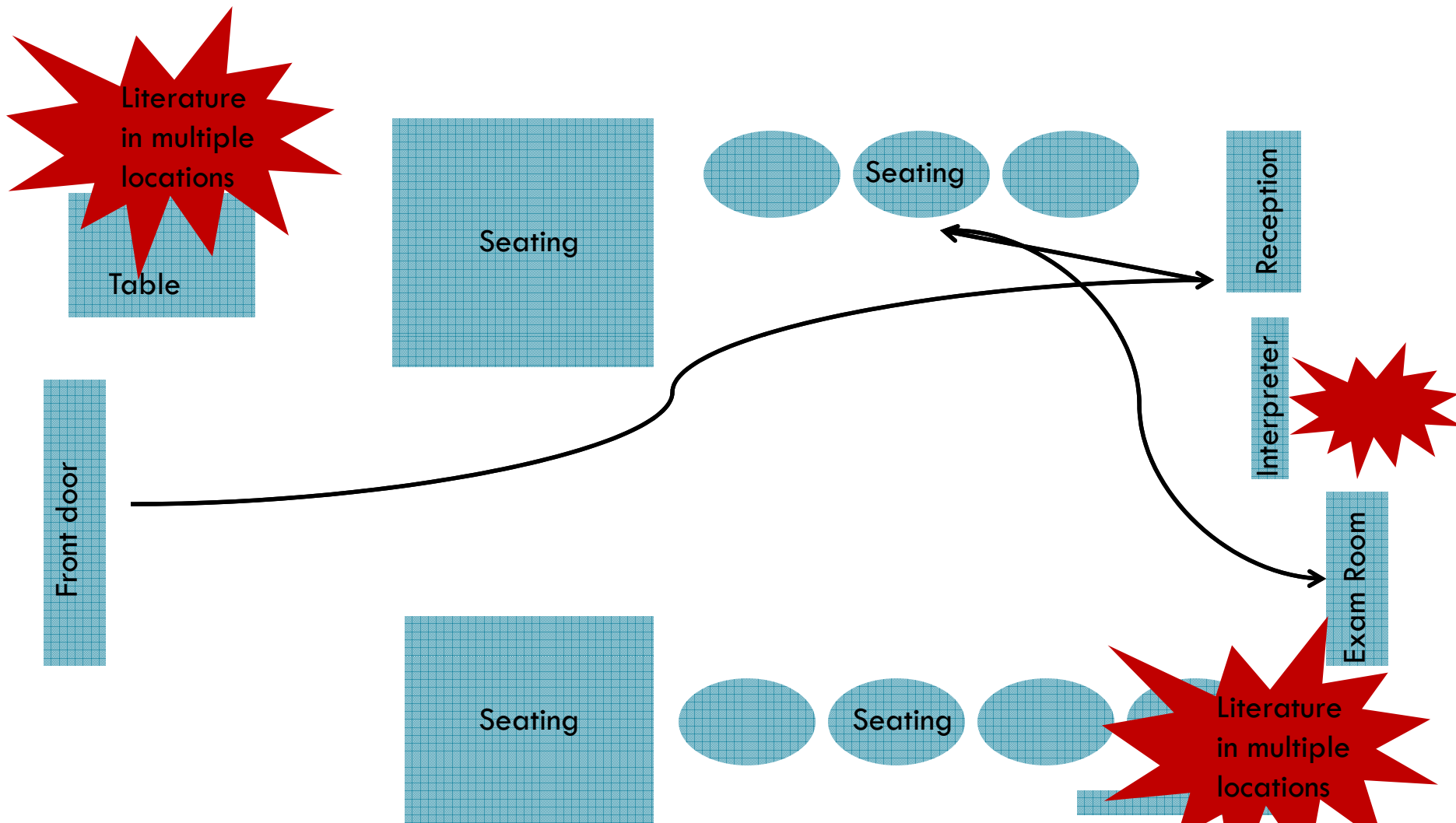
Current Strengths

- The FQHC's passion for patient-centered care
 - Initial contact
 - Cultural competency
 - Above and beyond care
 - Compassion and emotional support
 - Recognize need for adaptation
- Appropriate staff member is regularly available
 - If not, prompt return call from the MD is common
- Literature available in many languages throughout the waiting room

Process Flow: Current Condition



Current Condition



Opportunities for Improvement

- Discharge and follow-up
- Visual aids
- Library and brochures
- Registration forms for non-English speaking patients
- Forms and financial aid
- Standard operating procedures
- Referrals with local organizations

Ideas for Improvement

- Standardize 'Discharge Care Plan'
- Increase visual management throughout the clinic
- Shorten and translate more forms to other languages
- Organize library and brochures
- Standardize check-in process
- Connect and educate referring organizations

Target Condition

- Increase knowledge of health information and patient compliance for all non-English speaking patients by 50%
- Measured by follow up visits in the next six months



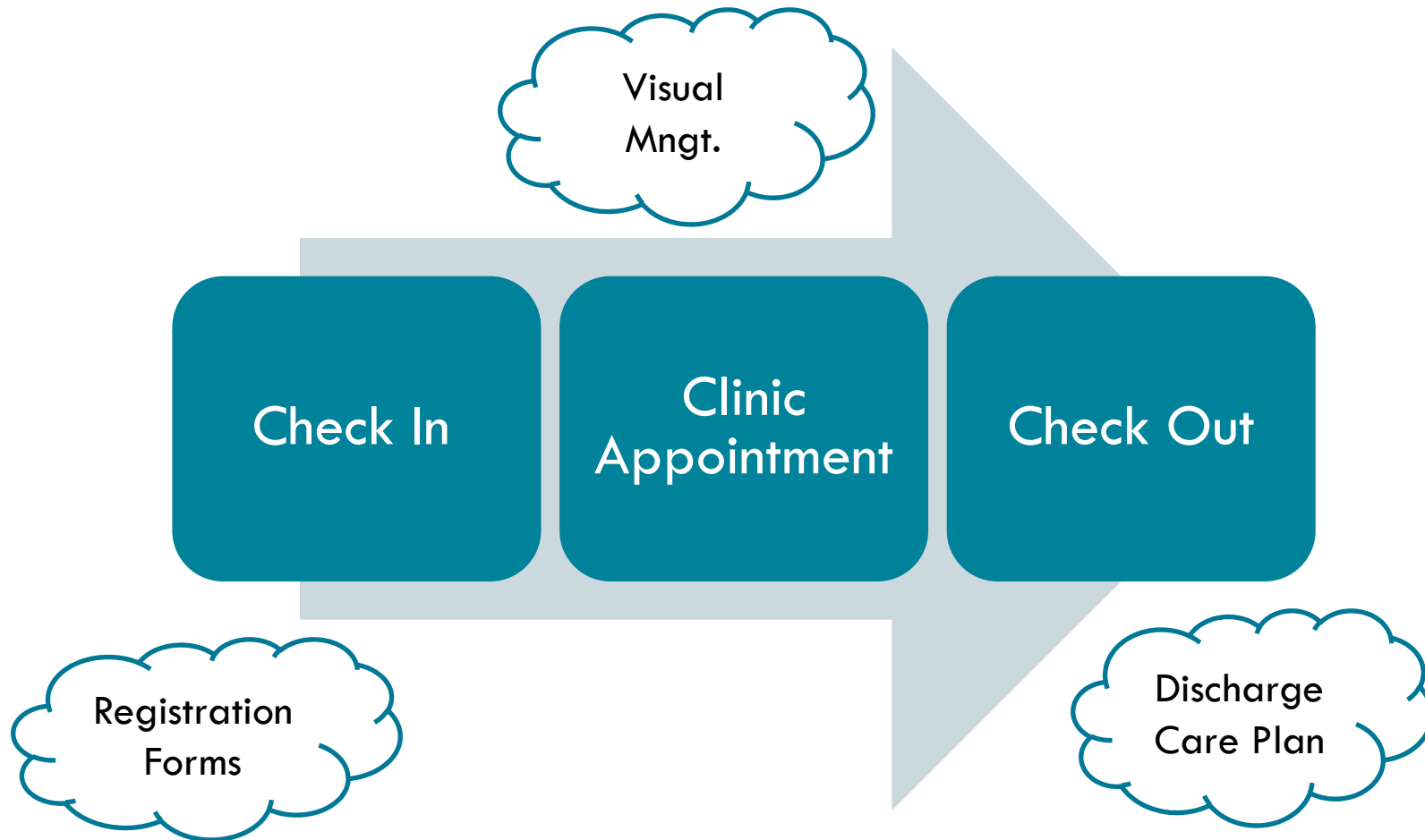
Plan for Proposed Experiment

- Develop standardized discharge instructions
 - Interdisciplinary input
 - Physicians, social workers, patients, families
 - Provide information in several languages

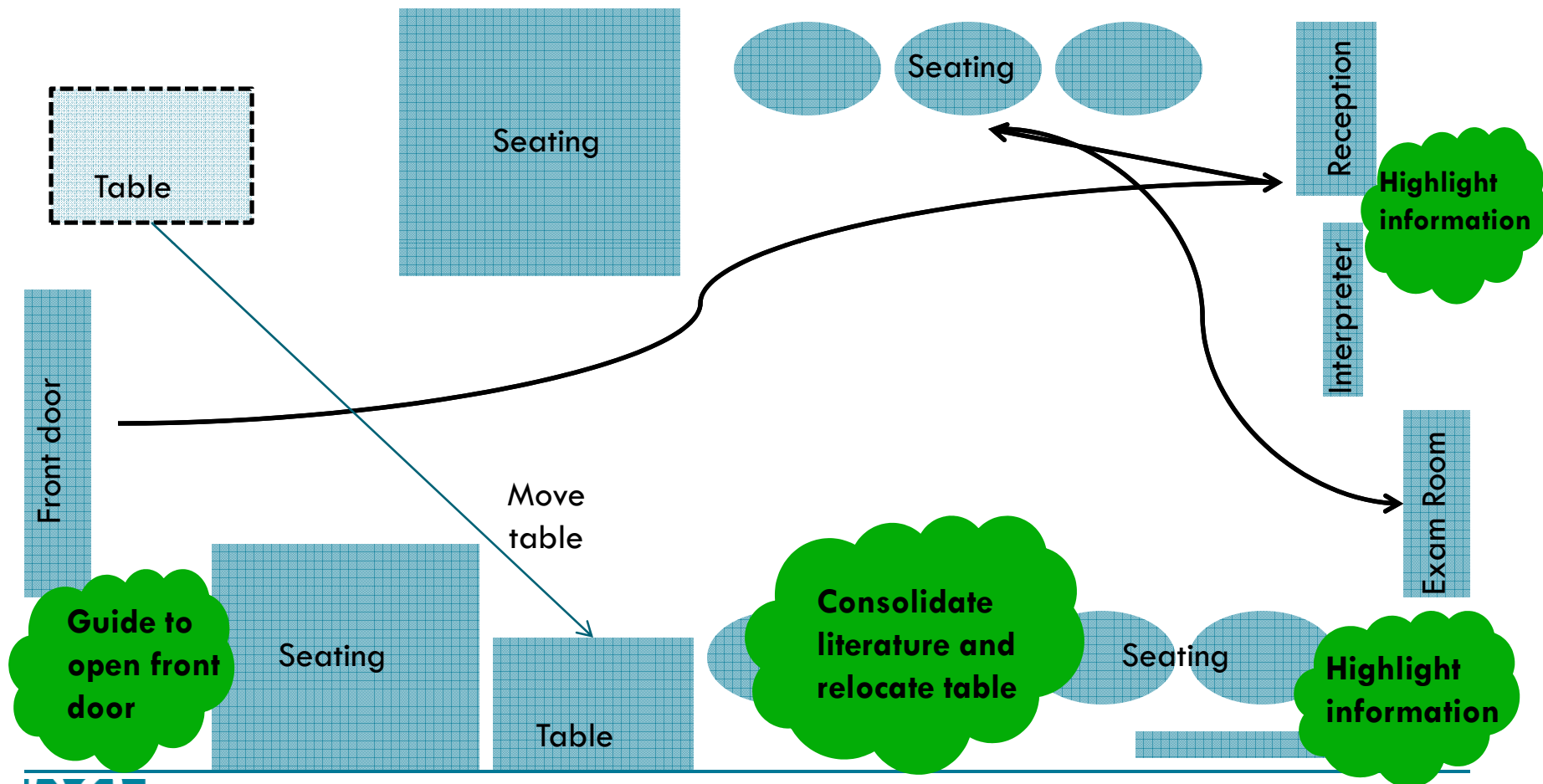
Proposed Change in Front Area

- Organization of patient education
 - Consolidate all literature to a single location or have a unique location for each language
 - Utilize the message board and tables for placing literature
- Visual Management
 - Place information either at the entrance or at the clinic
 - Highlight interpreter information next to reception
 - Place the sign to open the door in multiple languages
- Discharge Planning
 - Have return visit information in multiple languages

Target Condition



Target Condition



Learning

■ Barriers

- Non-English speaking patients
- Walk-Ins
- Staff shortages
- English-only speaking staff

Thanks/Recognition

- Jewish Healthcare Foundation
- The FQHC*

*Name not disclosed to protect privacy



© Jewish Healthcare Foundation
Patient Safety Fellowship

