

# Collective Medical helps ACO reduce cost of care & improve patient satisfaction



“Collective proved essential to enabling CMA to accurately track and manage patients for more seamlessly coordinated care and more efficient ED utilization.”

- Nicholas Leute,  
MHPA, CPHRM, CLS,  
Chief of Staff and Director of  
Performance Improvement,  
Risk Management & Corporate  
Compliance at CMA

## Columbia Medical Associates

Columbia Medical Associates (CMA) is a 60+ provider practice in Spokane, Washington. Part of Kaiser Permanente, CMA is an integrated multi-specialty group practice which serves the greater Spokane area. It participates in the Medicare Shared Savings Program as an ACO. CMA's mission is to provide consistent high-quality care and services through a multi-disciplinary and patient centered approach.

### Challenge

In 2016, CMA identified unnecessary emergency department (ED) utilization as an area of improvement.

The challenge became how to understand which patients were being admitted unnecessarily and steer them to CMA primary care when appropriate. To address this, CMA needed two things:

- 1) Better information about its patients' ED utilization to enable a higher level of care management
- 2) Improved internal processes to better accommodate patient needs

## Solution

As a first step, CMA deployed the Collective Medical platform in October 2016. The Collective platform is a real-time, risk-adjusted event notification and care collaboration tool that identifies at-risk and complex patients and pushes critical patient insights at the point of care. This information would prove essential to enabling CMA to accurately track and support patients for more seamlessly coordinated care and more efficient ED utilization.

Next, CMA took steps to better accommodate post-discharge appointments. Its providers, who understood and supported this initiative, began maintaining at least two daily schedule openings, with select providers dedicated exclusively to same-day appointments. CMA trained front-desk personnel to better utilize triage nurses, who worked with providers to schedule urgent appointments as efficiently as possible, including scheduling patients directly.

On the patient side, CMA provided education on the importance of getting the right care at the right time. This included new website materials and, for each patient who made a potentially avoidable ED visit, personal conversations with medical assistants. Providers were trained to screen patients for issues that could impede care, such as lack of transportation, and to connect patients to appropriate in-house services.

## Outcomes

With insights from Collective and operational improvements, CMA steadily improved both avoidable ED utilization and patient satisfaction. All relevant metrics showed substantial improvements when comparing 2017 to 2016, including:

15% reduction in ED utilization per 1,000 paneled patients

7% reduction in avoidable ED admissions

16% increase in patient satisfaction regarding availability of urgent appointments

13% increase in provider engagement scores (internal staff surveys)

Overall increase in patient satisfaction, placing CMA #1 in Washington state

These achievements were accompanied by an estimated **\$6.5 million reduction in care costs**, including lower patient copays through better use of CMA primary care services – all with a minimal staff increase of only one full-time employee

---

With the Collective network and operational improvements, CMA reduced avoidable ED admissions while achieving the state's #1 ranking for patient satisfaction.

---

## About Collective Medical

Collective empowers care teams to improve patient outcomes by closing the communication gaps that undermine care.

[www.CollectiveMedical.com](http://www.CollectiveMedical.com)

