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### **Access Is Meaningful (AIM): Working with Community Health Centers to Improve Access to Care.**

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# Access Is Meaningful (AIM): Working with Community Health Centers to Improve Access to Care

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## Background

We are partnering with community health centers (CHCs) and their patients to redesign systems to deliver timely care to underserved populations in Indiana.

Our Delphi study was designed to address two questions:

- 1) What solutions (e.g. organizational factors, processes, procedures) serve as facilitators to accessing care?
- 2) What organizational strategies might work to implement solutions in CHC environments?

## Methods

- We used a modified Delphi method, bringing experts together for a face-to-face meeting to prioritize solutions for reducing access barriers and strategies to implement the solutions.
- We invited clinicians, operational leaders, staff and patients to participate. Including patients, rarely done with underserved populations, required us to modify the traditional Delphi method.
- Our modified Delphi approach, which included a patient orientation session, allowed patients to participate as equals among other experts.



We invited 46 experts from across Indiana. Thirty-six attended the event but only 33 voted (11 patients).



We aggregated a list of 39 solutions and 8 implementation strategies from 89 key informant interviews of CHC patients, staff, clinicians and administrators completed in an earlier phase of our study. Delphi participants contributed an additional 11 solutions and 3 strategies that were included in the ranking activity.



Our Delphi process resulted in three rounds of voting:

- 1) Round one was completed by the participants prior to coming to the event using ranking forms. Participants ranked each item by giving the item a score 1, 2, or 3:

1	2	3
Very Important	Somewhat Important	Not as Important

- 2) Round two was completed during the event using paper posters with individual items around the room. Top items were identified based on highest count of number 1 votes for a particular item.
- 3) Following group discussion roughly half of the items were removed for the 3<sup>rd</sup> of ranking, which was completed in a similar fashion to round 2.

## Results

Top ten solutions for improving access to care:

'Modified Open Access' scheduling	Reduced costs for uninsured patients	Extended hours	Enhanced customer service	Offer dental services
Coordinated follow-up care	'Walk-in' urgent care	Improved telephone process	Enhancement to Medicaid	Lower cost insurance

Top five operational strategies:

Form a planning team	Develop an assessment plan	Communication with staff	Communication with patients & community	Team-based care
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## Conclusions

The Delphi study was conducted with patients, staff and content experts to prioritize and weigh solutions to improve access to healthcare in the CHC patient population. The Delphi study also produced suitable strategies for implementing solutions. The prioritized lists that emerged will be used to specify the targeted efforts we make in the final phase of our larger study currently underway in three intervention CHCs.

