

WPHCA

2025 Performance Excellence Award Nominee  
Pillar Health (Kenosha Community Health Centers)

## IMPROVING THE TRIAGE PROCESS: INCREASING PATIENT SAFETY AND REDUCING EMERGENCY DEPARTMENT UTILIZATION

Pillar Health (Kenosha Community Health Center) identified opportunities to enhance the triage process for both patients and providers. The initiative aimed to establish a workflow that ensured real-time, consistent, and evidence-based triage for symptom-based patient calls.

The team focused on patient safety and improvement standards to decrease adverse events in the office by triaging patients to the appropriate level of care, increasing patient satisfaction by having those patients that can be seen in the office added to the schedule in the appropriate time frame, decreasing unnecessary emergency room use, and maximizing effectiveness of this service while limiting costs to the organization.

In collaboration with a third-party vendor, the team developed and implemented policies, procedures, and comprehensive training for all personnel involved in daily operations—including front desk staff, nursing staff, and providers.

As a result of the improved triage workflow, the organization:

- Achieved an emergency department avoidance rate of 83.7%
- Increased patient awareness of services and almost doubled the monthly number of calls to triage
- Scheduled office appointments for 57% of triaged patients
- Received national recognition from the Medical Home Network as a top three performer for emergency department utilization
- Improved Overall Patient Experience with a reported Balanced Scorecard of 4.81/5
- Saved 76% of cost when compared with a nursing salary

Once implemented, data showed that the new workflow improved standard of care for Pillar Health patients, eliminated the need for providers to support triage services when a triage nurse wasn't available, and increased patient awareness of the triage service before going to the emergency room.



### Improvement Team:

- Mary Ouimet, CEO
- Karla Boho, Director of Clinical Practice Transformation
- Karen Matteucci, Supervisor for Intake, Triage, After Hours and Referrals
- Angelica Sanchez, IT/EHR Systems Supervisor
- Jennifer Rehorst, Data Analyst and Report Writer
- Customer Experience Supervisor
- Operation Managers
- Vice President of Clinical Operations