



Shorter Queues for Patients with Chronic Diseases at Kraaifontein Community Health Centre

“Waiting time improved from 41 minutes in October 2012 to 19 minutes in April 2013.”

In a period of six months, the Kraaifontein Community Health Centre (KCHC) managed to cut in half the average patient waiting time for pre-prepared packs of medicine (PMPs) for chronic diseases. Patients attending KCHC found their waiting time reduced from slightly over 40 to below 20 minutes per visit, culminating in reduced queues and an improved overall patient experience. This improvement was achieved thanks to the Leadership Development Program (LDP) facilitated by the USAID-funded Systems for Improved Access to Pharmaceuticals and Services (SIAPS) Program.

Photo courtesy of KCHC KCHC is a 24-hour facility providing a comprehensive health care service to communities in the Northern Tygerberg Sub-structure of Metro District Health Services in the Western Cape. The facility sees on average 23,000 patients per month. The average number of patients seen in the pharmacy on a daily basis is 838. Each day, an average of 328 patients collect PMPs from the facility. These PMPs are prepared off-site by a private service provider.

KCHC had changed to a new Chronic Dispensing Unit (CDU) contractor in 2012 but the outcome was poor--patient waiting times increased resulting in decreased quality of service delivery and patient experience. A project to reduce the waiting time for a PMP at KCHC was consequently undertaken by the Facility Manager and the Pharmacy Manager as part of the SIAPS LDP. Working in teams, participants tackle one of their own workplace issues by applying the Challenge Model—a tool developed by MSH that allows health care workers to tackle one challenge at a time. In working through the model, participants create a shared vision and define one measurable result, thereafter identifying root causes of the problem and developing an action plan. Teams then implement their plan and monitor and evaluate progress.



Happy patients and personnel April 2013

In applying the model, KCHC decided to address the challenge of reducing the waiting time at the CDU. The goal was to decrease waiting time for these patients from an October 2012 baseline of more than 60 minutes to less than 30 minutes.

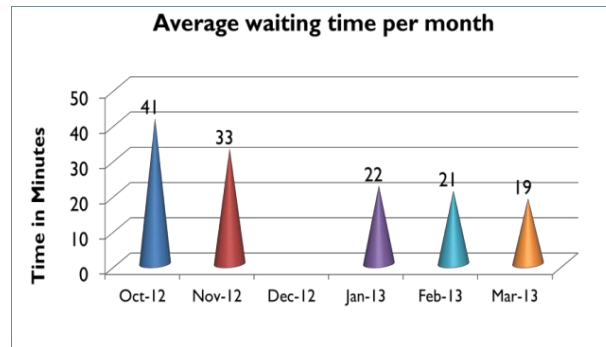
Interventions were introduced to improve the efficiency of the system by giving clients on

chronic medication a copy of their prescription, thereby eliminating the need for them to queue to collect their files. A second dispensing window was opened during peak hours and staggered appointments between 08h00 and 14h00 were introduced for patients collecting PMPs. With these measures in place, waiting times were monitored over a six-month period.



USAID
FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE

SIAPS
Systems for Improved Access
to Pharmaceuticals and Services



After six months, it was noted that the average waiting time had improved from 41 minutes in October 2012 to 19 minutes in April 2013 resulting in fewer patients and shorter queues in the waiting rooms. Patients have responded well to accepting responsibility for carrying a copy of their own

prescription. The staff at KCHC are committed to sustaining these short waiting times and keeping their clients happy.