

Office Design Principles

Office layout and design are very important in a physician-RN primary care practice. A well designed office space can facilitate teamwork and improve patient care. While it is possible for a registered nurse and physician team to work effectively with only two exam rooms, three or more provide more flexibility. Some office design principles include:

- Arrange the office so exam rooms are in close proximity
- Provide RN with a dedicated office/exam room to facilitate use of patient education materials and teaching aides during patient visit
- Implement electronic medical records system to enhance communication and efficiency
- Develop a system to alert physician or RN when they are needed for patient care (e.g. alert delivered via electronic device, placing the door ajar, intercom.)

Other office space principles:

- Seat health-care professional closest to the door
- Install sound-proofing and optimize privacy for the patients (curtains, placement of exam table)
- Locate blood pressure cuff so patient can be seated with feet on floor, back supported and arm supported at heart level
- Arrange computer screen and keyboard to enable health-care provider to face patient
- Ensure accessibility for those with physical challenges (e.g. grab bars, ramps for wheelchairs), paying special attention to the washroom, which should be large enough for a wheelchair and have a raised toilet seat
- Ensure doors are wide enough for a stretcher
- Ensure room set up consistently if providers are sharing it