

Six 's for Reopening Your Rural Health Clinic

1. **Reassure.** Communicate with your patients and your community. Send a message that your clinic is a safe place and that you have their primary care needs are top priority. Spread this positive message to your patients through email, social media sites, websites, and by phoning them. Consider having your providers record a FB video message that explains how your RHC is even a safer place now because of all the extra measures you have taken.
2. **Refresh.** Make sure that your clinic sparkles and shines. Reduced operating hours and disruption in normal services may have left gaps in your normal cleaning schedule. Give your clinic a facelift. Pay attention to both the inside of your clinic and to the exterior appearance of the building, landscape, and parking lot.
3. **Regroup.** Be proactive and strategic in getting back to business as normally as possible. Staffing and patient volumes may still be erratic during the transition period and yet the focus needs to be moving forward.
4. **Reassess.** Identify patients who have missed preventive services, immunizations, scheduled labs, and maintenance services. Create a plan for recalling those patients and getting them looped back into primary care. When scheduling appointments, notify patient of any COVID screening processes that remain in place.
5. **Retrain.** Take time to also answer employee and staff questions about reopening. There is an opportunity to train new and existing staff on clinic policies and procedures including anything that has been revised during the public health emergency and for reopening. Document this training as part of your after-action report.
6. **Remember.** Re-center your clinic by revisiting your core mission of providing quality healthcare to your rural community. It's been tough and it may not be over, but your patients depend on you. Stay positive and team-focused. RHCs are the chosen ones. Believe.

Patty Harper
InQuiseek, LLC
pharper@inquiseek.com