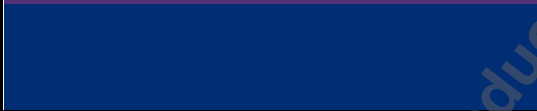


**Why Was it Designed This Way? Can We Have a Do-Over? WIC Program Appointment Scheduling Systems – Let's Think Twice**

Dawn Middleton, Meredith Jones, and Amanda Wright




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### Learning Objectives

- Examine rationale for streamlining appointment time intervals and scheduling criteria
- Analyze data to identify how to determine average time in face-to-face contact with a nutritionist
- Describe 2-3 best practices in the development and implementation of a WIC agency appointment scheduling system




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### Introductions

- Use **one** word to describe the process of making an appointment for a WIC participant at your local agency.




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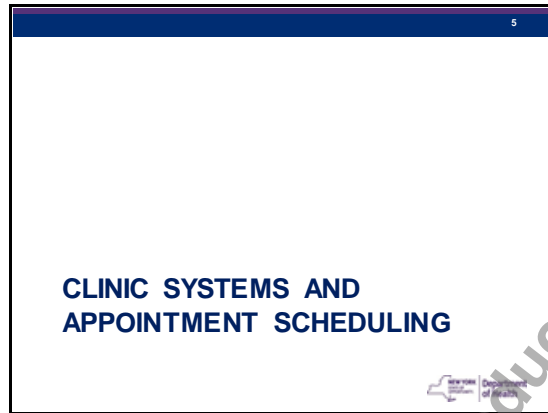
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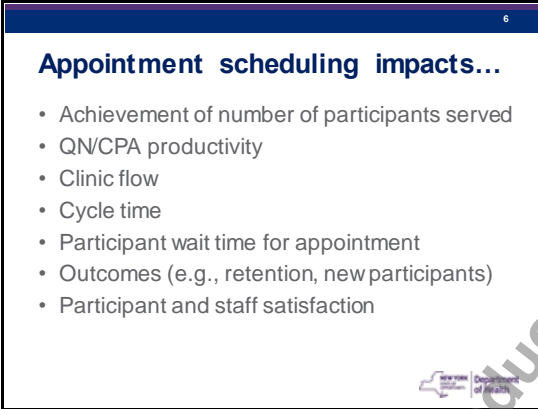
### Where did it all start?

- How was your appointment schedule template and scheduling approach ~~was~~ developed?
- How did they learn to schedule appointments?



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**Appointment scheduling impacts...**

- Achievement of number of participants served
- QN/CPA productivity
- Clinic flow
- Cycle time
- Participant wait time for appointment
- Outcomes (e.g., retention, new participants)
- Participant and staff satisfaction


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It is critical to customize the appointment template to best meet the needs of both clients and the agency. Scheduling an appointment may be the first contact a participant has with the agency. First impressions count, and participants remember and value the treatment they received during the appointment.

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### Appointment scheduling should...

- Facilitate the steady stream of participants throughout the workday, resulting in
  - Maximum staff productivity
  - Minimum participant wait time



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### Appointment Intervals

- How many appointment time intervals does your local agency have?

1? 2? 3? 4?

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### Calculate Nutritionist Visit Time

- Real data from a cycle time study
- Represents one day at one clinic for all QN visits
- Calculate the average time spent with a nutritionist




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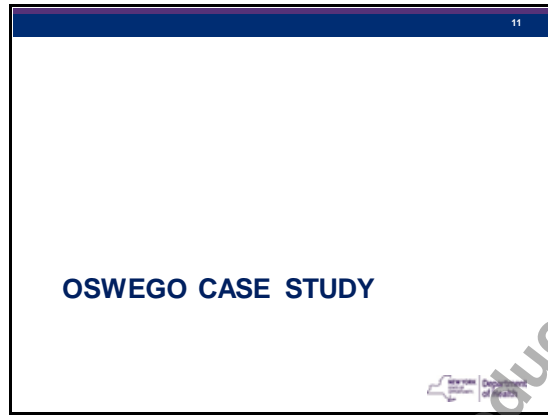
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### Report Out

- What surprised you?
- What didn't surprise you?
- What does this mean for appointment intervals?



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**What did we want to find out and why?**

- How long are participants spending with nutritionists during their appointments?



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### What did we do?

- Nutritionist Time Frame Survey
  - Collected data regarding the time participant(s) spend with their nutritionist (time start and time stop)
  - Didn't take into consideration the type of appointment




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**What did we find out?**


Time	Number of Participants
19 minutes	1
24 minutes	2
28 minutes	3
26 minutes	4
<b>22 minutes</b>	<b>OVERALL AVERAGE</b>

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### Putting Data to Use

- What does this mean for appointment scheduling intervals?
- What does this mean for scheduling criteria?



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### Scheduling Criteria: Before and After

The image displays two side-by-side screenshots of a scheduling criteria document, labeled 'Before' and 'After'. The 'Before' screenshot on the left shows a complex, multi-column table with various scheduling criteria. The 'After' screenshot on the right shows a simplified version of the same document, with many criteria removed or consolidated. A large, diagonal watermark across the slide reads 'Property of NYS DOH / May Not be Reproduced or Copied'. In the bottom right corner of the slide, there is a logo for the New York State Department of Health (NYS DOH) and the text 'Division of Health Planning and Resources'.






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### Best Practices

- Reduce appointment scheduling time intervals
  - 1 or 2 intervals is optimal
- Simplify appointment scheduling criteria
  - Extensive criteria creates unnecessary complexity for staff
  - Extensive criteria reduces efficiency of process
  - Extensive criteria has not been shown to produce better outcome



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### Reduce Complexity Together

- **Part 1: Standardize appointment intervals**
  - Choose an increment based on the average time participants spend with nutritionists
  - Build short and long appointments based on that increment or standardize on one length
- **Part 2: Streamline scheduling criteria**
  - Develop a few criteria to help you categorize an appointment as short or long




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**Part 1: Standardize appointment intervals**

- What is the average time a participant spends with a nutritionist? How do you know? How would you find out?
- Based on the information you have now: what time interval would you assign to a short and long appointment?




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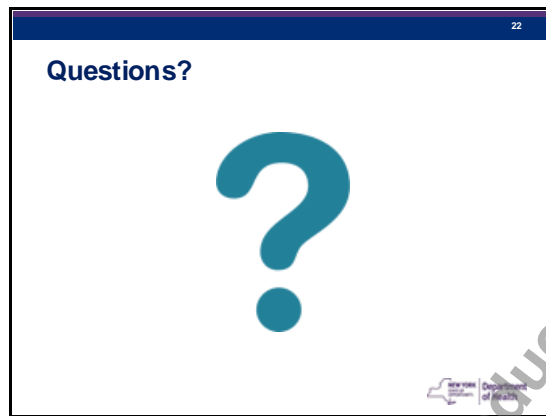
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**Part 2: Streamline scheduling criteria**

- What is your current criteria for assignment of participant to an appointment slot?
- How could you reduce this to no more than 5 (3 is best)?



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