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District's VP and Executive Director of Clinic Services walks a mile with LaDorn Wilson, Patient Access Team Leader and Trainer



CHRIS IRIZARRY, VP AND EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF CLINIC SERVICES,
WITH LADORN WILSON, PATIENT ACCESS TEAM LEADER & TRAINER

JUNE 2017

WALK A MILE IN YOUR SHOES



Health Care District
PALM BEACH COUNTY

SPOTLIGHTING DEDICATED PEOPLE
WHO DO AMAZING WORK.

LaDorn Wilson

Patient Access Team Leader and Trainer, Patient Access Management
Department

Profiled by Christopher F. Irizarry, MPA,
Vice President and Executive Director of Clinic Services

The heart and soul of any successful organization is its customer service. When I was asked to observe and write about my experience with the Health Care District's Patient Access Management Department (formerly Customer Service), I was elated! It was an opportunity to witness the great work that goes on in that department every day.

On May 08, 2017, I arrived at 8:45 a.m. to the home office on 10th Avenue North in Palm Springs. The Patient Access Management Department is located on the 4th floor, near the Montreal East and West conference rooms. You know the office – the one when you are in a meeting in

TOP

Montreal and you see employees walking out of a door that seems to lead to a top secret area. That's the office, the one near the vending machines! This is where our Patient Access "warriors" sit on the phone and assist thousands of patients, providers and members each week. Whether the patients are calling for an appointment at a clinic, to complain about a provider, or ask questions about their coverage, they will reach one of our patient access representatives who are standing by to help. And while I may have thought that the calls are limited to those scenarios, I quickly learned there is much, much more.

Phones keep ringing

So there I was, standing and listening to the multiple conversations. The representatives answered, "C. L. Brumback Primary Care Clinics, how may I help you?" It was music to my ears. Please understand how important I feel it is that we are a part of these Clinics and how I hope and yes, pray, that people will continue to seek and use our services. To hear dozens of calls coming in was exciting! The phones rang and rang, and as soon as one call ended, the representatives answered another call. All I could think to myself was, "This does not stop, and calls just keep coming in?" As one staff member walked by I said, "Good morning," and asked, "How are you?" She replied, "Great! Today is Monday and yesterday was Friday." I thought that was funny. But I can imagine why it feels that way. The phone never stops ringing.

Then I was introduced to the Patient Access Team Leader and Trainer whom I was here to shadow and eavesdrop on, LaDorn Wilson. From the moment I started working here four years ago, I noticed LaDorn, but we had never officially met. When the Clinics' administrative office was

located on the second floor of the home office, LaDorn would visit the second floor and take her power walk around the entire exterior walkway. Of course, she did this during her breaks and boy, did she walk fast. I remember LaDorn's pleasant smile, one that can light up a room.



Meeting for the first time

So I was pleased that I was finally going to meet and speak to LaDorn. At 9:07 a.m., I sat near LaDorn, put on a headset, and listened in to the call as it came in instantly. It was former President Obama. Just kidding! I just wanted to make sure you were still paying attention. The first caller spoke

[TOP](#)

very low. LaDorn politely asked the patient to speak louder. The patient had just enrolled on a plan under the Affordable Care Act and was looking for a provider. LaDorn became a salesperson, explaining our different clinic sites and services. The patient was impressed and made an appointment.

Then, as soon as she hung up the phone at 9:12 a.m., she answered another call from a Florida Blue patient who was calling to make an appointment. She started telling LaDorn all of the ailments she suffers from and then listed all of her husband's health conditions. LaDorn politely asked for the patient's date of birth. It seems that until the representative has identified the person on the phone and pulls up their information on the screen, very little assistance can be provided. Without that birthdate, you are wasting time. I can tell LaDorn wants to be efficient.

Efficient, courteous and friendly

As soon as LaDorn opened the patient's screen on her computer, she started to prepare the intake, or record, for the patient. There was a lot of information to collect. And in between every question, the patient discussed a different medical ailment. LaDorn identified an appointment date for the patient, but then the patient asked if her husband could schedule an appointment on the same day and time. Of course, LaDorn tried to accommodate the request. But the caller did not want to wait so long for the earliest available appointment where both she and her husband could visit together. The patient proceeded to make the appointment for herself and schedule a separate, later appointment date for her husband. She kept asking if her husband could call and cancel in case that date did not work. All I could think to myself was that he would

TOP

most likely not show up at the clinic for his appointment. The call went on until 9:27 a.m. LaDorn ended the call on an upbeat note by saying, “Have a good day!”

Then the phone rang again. Calls kept coming in. Patients called for various reasons: they forgot their appointment date, wanted to change their medications, were looking for their lab results, needed to change their pharmacy, wanted help for their toothache, wanted to reschedule an appointment they missed, wanted to confirm their appointment, or had questions about their referrals. What impressed me the most was how LaDorn handled every single inquiry with patience, respect, and a determination to provide the caller with the correct answer. For each inquiry, LaDorn found the answer, never once saying, “I don’t know,” or “You will have to ask someone in the clinic.” In her first two hours answering the phone, LaDorn fielded 27 calls.

Power-walking a mile in her shoes



Then it was time for LaDorn's morning break. I sat on the chair and proceeded to change out of my shoes and pull on my sneakers, just like on Mr. Rogers Neighborhood. The rest of the staff looked at me with pity. They whispered, "Can he keep up with LaDorn?" We went to the second floor, and boy, did I walk a mile in her shoes – literally! I burned some calories to learn more about this amazing coworker.

[TOP](#)



Left to right: Chris Irizarry; Marie Altidor, Patient Access Coordinator (PAC); LaDorn Wilson; Christina George (PAC); Sonja Carter, Patient Access Analyst (PAA); Marilyn Santiago (PAC); Lisa Took's (PAC); Lizette Torres (PAC); DeVonna Caldwell (PAC); Kathy Steele, Patient Access Supervisor; and Gerald Dominique (PAC). Not pictured: Ronnie Morales, Patient Access Trainer and Team Leader; Christine Melero (PAC); Joana Rusano (PAC); and Amy Walker, Director of Patient Access.

As I tried keeping pace with her, LaDorn told me she was born and raised in West Palm Beach. She lived for a short period of time in Colorado. She worked for the State of Florida for 15 years, including Child Welfare. She began her studies at Palm Beach State College and later studied clothing and textiles at Florida State University, home of the Gators? (Just kidding! Forgive me, I am a Rutgers University Scarlet Knight from New Jersey.) LaDorn wanted to be a fashion buyer, but ended up not liking retail. Her^{TOP} passion is simply helping others. LaDorn has worked for the Health Care

District for ten years. She walks three to four miles a day, is lefthanded (like I am), and it's no surprise that she dislikes answering her phone at home. Her passion for work is driven by her faith and we are all truly blessed to have her as part of the Health Care District family.

Answering the call of those in need

The Patient Access Management Department is an amazing place, full of some of the kindest employees in the District who understand the importance of quality customer service. While at times they encounter difficult patients on the phone, they have a keen understanding that everyone who calls needs our help. I got a sense that this is never forgotten by anyone, at any time. We are fortunate to have this group of dedicated employees who are willing to answer the hard questions, take on the difficult clients, and make life easier for them and the rest of us. After getting to know LaDorn and members of the Patient Access Management team, I just want to say, thank you.

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Date: May 07, 2024

Location:

In-Person & Zoom Meeting - SEE MEETING DETAILS INCLUDED.

Lakeside Medical Center

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