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Growth and Expansion at Asante Physician Partners

You're not imagining things if it seems there are a lot of new faces at Asante Physician Partners. The most tangible indicator – the number of APP providers – has nearly doubled in the past year, from 122 to the current 204.



The organization's leaders – Asante vice president and APP Executive Director Sheri Bodager; and Asante vice president and APP Executive Medical Director Doug Diehl, MD – pointed out several recent milestones in an email two weeks ago to employees. APP, which was created in 2012, has grown to more than 600 total employees.

“There have been so many amazing results from our providers and Asante teams this year, (we) want to share a few of them to allow all of us time to reflect and celebrate the hard work that our very dedicated and skilled teams across Asante have accomplished,” the two leaders wrote.

Sheri noted that the ongoing success story goes well beyond APP, and has been supported by

Asante departments including Information Technology Services, Facilities, Real Estate, Human Resources, Communications and Marketing, and Purchasing. “It is one amazing team across the organization that made it happen,” she wrote.

APP added seven new practices in 2015, and now has a total of 30 practices or locations. Of 11 primary care or urgent care practices in APP, four came onboard in the past year – and the organization now employs a total of 72 primary care providers.

A second Lithia Motors clinic was added by APP, at the dealership group's auto mall on Highway 62. It provides the same health services that are offered at Lithia's first employee clinic in downtown Medford.

In Ashland, patients' primary care options have increased and both general surgery and gynecology are now offered. In Medford, APP has added a new cardiovascular surgeon, a maternal-fetal medicine physician, two neurologists and two pulmonologists. And three ear, nose and throat specialists have joined APP in Grants Pass.

Five additional APP primary care medical homes were certified in 2015, joining the initial two that were rolled out the previous year at APP Family Medicine-Grants Pass and APP Family Medicine-Murphy Road. A medical home is a team-based and provider-led model of health care that is intended to offer comprehensive care for patients and improve their health outcomes. As part of its move toward medical homes, APP has begun the process of embedding social workers and

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pharmacists in its primary care practices.

All of APP's medical assistants have been certified and are training to help providers with tasks such as data entry and patient preventive care, pharmacy needs, medical history and health maintenance coordination.

APP is supporting provisions of the federal Affordable Care Act, which encourages health systems to reduce hospital readmissions, by initiating a joint effort with the three Asante hospitals. The goal is to reduce the number of patients who are readmitted by directing patients to their primary care providers within three to five days after discharge from a hospital.

Of 51 patients who were discharged in the program's first month and who had APP primary care providers, only eight were not seen by their regular providers within five days. Patients who saw pulmonologists within three to five days of their hospital discharge have so far had a readmission rate of just 3.13 percent, compared to a 20 percent readmission rate for those who didn't see pulmonologists. Readmissions are based on a 90-day period following discharge, so some additional readmissions of the initial patients could occur until Feb. 1.

APP partnered with Propel Health – an organization of seven Oregon health systems, including Asante, with a shared goal of improving patient outcomes and managing costs – to launch a Complex Care program in December with 12 initial patients who have been identified as “at risk” for unnecessary emergency department visits and admissions. The free, individualized service pairs patients with care advisors who help manage their health.

More information about APP and its providers is [available online](#).