

## Primary Care Group Uses RAAPS Survey to Assess Teen Risk

The Medical Associates Clinic, P.C., is a multi-specialty medical practice delivering primary and specialty health care to residents of the tri-state area in Dubuque, Iowa.

Established in 1924, Medical Associates is the oldest multispecialty group practice clinic in Iowa. It has 108 physicians, 44 other providers, 997 total employees, 33 specialties, and ancillary services including radiology, lab, physical and occupational therapy, pharmacy, and an ambulatory surgery center. It has been recognized since 1998 as a “better performing practice” by the Medical Group Management Association.

Lisa Meyer is a nurse practitioner with Medical Associates primary care pediatrics and has been with the organization 15 years. She sees 20 to 30 kids daily, from birth to adolescence.

## Large, Multi-Specialty Practice Identifies Risky Behaviors Previously Undetected

Medical Associates has used the online Rapid Assessment for Adolescent Preventive Services (RAAPS) for several years to screen adolescents ages 12 - 18. RAAPS is given annually to teens receiving physical or gyn exams and to youth for whom providers have mental health concerns. Meyer initiated use of RAAPS at Medical Associates because of a need to address risky behaviors that often went undiagnosed and unknown. Since starting to use RAAPS, Meyer said many teens have commented that she discovered a lot about them — including information they often don’t share when they are “just talked to.”

“RAAPS works well because the kids are very honest with the computer system,” Meyer said. “Kids were not as honest on paper, and many parents would be looking over their shoulders as they were completing it,” she said of the manual tool she used to use.

The former assessment also required her to tally results by hand, whereas RAAPS produces time-saving, highly accessible electronic reports. “This was a wonderful improvement. It is much more efficient and much more effective,” she said.

## After Easy, Online Implementation (No Software Involved), Medical Staff Members Save Time, Have Greater Impact

Using a browser-based system with nothing to install was a definite plus. Training took all of 20 minutes. Once the clinic flow processes were set, it was easy to use and mesh with the daily routine. Now, teens complete the RAAPS as they are waiting to be seen.

After teens use the RAAPS system, Meyer reviews the results electronically and provides any indicated counseling for each youth. The saved time allows her to see more kids and be a more effective provider. She said the teens value the system’s privacy and are relieved to get support for their identified needs.

Today, Meyer is teaching all of the Medical Associates providers how to use the system and work it into their care processes. She plans to have all providers on board by year's end, often relying on office nurses to help with implementation and clinic flow. All of those who use the system currently are very pleased with it.

Meyer said she's looking forward to fully integrating RAAPS with the McKesson electronic medical record. Currently, in the McKesson system they can see that the RAAPS screenings were done and what the outcomes were.

## Electronic Assessment Allows In-Depth Tracking, Reporting and Support Teens Want

Medical Associates today applauds RAAPS for its consistency of questions and information gathered as well as consistency in assessments among providers.

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In addition, Meyer uses RAAPS' reporting features to tabulate annual overviews about how many teens are depressed, how many teens are sexually active, etc. She uses trend information for comparative purposes, and also can compare Medical Associates' teen population to national peer group data available via RAAPS.

Meyer said the biggest value in RAAPS is that “We can now better help the kids by identifying their risky behaviors and providing counseling. At the end of the day, isn't that what it's all about? Kids have been relieved that we are asking about risky behaviors and they have the opportunity to get their concerns addressed.”

“RAAPS is now a 'must have' for us,” Meyer said. “RAAPS is a great value and we have derived more benefit than what we paid for it.”