Improving Rates of Depression Screening in a Specialty Clinic

Partners in Excellence – Preventive

Challenge
Depression can have an effect on physical health, including an increased risk of diabetes, cardiovascular disease, lower medication adherence, poor disease management, risk of mortality, and decreased quality of life. Depression screening is vital to identify patients who could benefit from resources to reach optimal physical and mental health, but it is rarely completed in specialty clinics. Depression screening was well below the MIPS 50th percentile at a pilot specialty clinic in 2019.

Process for change
Three elements were employed:

• Training:
  – Certified Medical Assistants in standard screening and follow-up workflow.
  – Providers supplied Q & A on how to ask sensitive questions: streamlined Epic documentation.
  – Identify the patient’s need and link to appropriate resources.

• EPIC changes: Alignment of Health Maintenance Alerts (HMA) with Merit-Based-Incentive-Payment (MIPS) criteria set by Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS).

• 1:1 Support: Quality Consultants and Epic Clinical Analysts worked collaboratively with operations leaders to share weekly huddle reports, investigate misses, and escalate underlying issues to leadership.

Results
• Screening rates rose from 16% to 94% within the first month of implementation in the pilot Endocrine clinic.
• The Cardiology clinic tripled their screening rates from 12.7% to 40.6% within the first three weeks of implementation.

Adoption considerations
• Executive support and alignment with strategic objectives at the organizational level was vital.
• Behavioral Health provided training for RNs and MDs to clarify responsibilities.
• Patient Care Supervisors held CMAs individually accountable and celebrated improvements.
• Clinical analysts assisted with back-end EPIC issues.
• Quality team provided weekly run charts for staff to gauge progress and address gaps and barriers.

Recommendations for sustaining the gains
• Continue run charts and huddle support for pilot areas.
• Spread to over 20 new EPIC specialty departments.
• Refine referral processes to behavioral health, social work, primary care, and/or emergency department.
Preventing Cancer with Improved Vaccination

Partners in Excellence – Preventive

**Challenge**

Based on Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) data, approximately 14 million people in the United States become infected with human papillomavirus (HPV) each year. Annually, over 30,000 people are impacted by cancer from an HPV infection. CentraCare Health is determined to become a leader in HPV-related cancer prevention by improving vaccination rates for adolescent and young adult patients.

**Process for change**

We conducted multiple training sessions throughout the organization that emphasized proven best practices of cancer prevention through vaccination. These were open to all but targeted providers and nursing staff. They also included education on technical aspects of the vaccine and the protection it provides through informative and inspirational testimony by fellow providers and an HPV cancer survivor.

Additionally, our provider vaccination data was transparent and displayed monthly. Series completion was aided by institution of a recall process. The EMR was adjusted to offer HPV vaccination starting at age 9.

Partners in the work are MDH AFIX, CentraCare Health Pediatrics Clinic, Coborn Cancer Center, Stearns County Public Health.

**Results**

- June 2018 HPV Series Completion for Adolescents = 55.8%
- January 2019 HPV Series Completion for Adolescents = 61.7%
- June 2019 HPV Series Completion for Adolescents = 63.9%
- 14.5% improvement in 12 months.

**Adoption considerations**

- Implementing a new, announcement-based approach of communication science.
- Staff hesitancy related to the value of the vaccine and to potential difficult patient conversations.

**Recommendations for sustaining the gains**

- Continue aggressive goals, transparency of goals, and provider performance.
- Partnering with St. Cloud State University School of Nursing to advise and assist with curriculum to influence the front-line vaccine champions of the future.
- Community impact - collaborating with area school health staff and students to equip them to influence students and parents regarding HPV vaccination.
Challenge
Major depression is the leading cause of disability worldwide (World Health Organization). The United States Preventive Task Force recommends routine screening of patients aged 12 and older. The majority of patients with depression receive their care exclusively in primary care clinics. To best support the patient’s psychosocial well-being, ongoing symptom assessment and evaluation of the treatment plan is needed.
Nearly 80% of patients with depression either do not seek care or are not receiving proper treatment for their depression. Sanford Health implemented a robust strategy to improve how depression is recognized and treated in primary care.

Process for change
- Initiated “universal” annual behavioral health screening, including depression.
- Trained all staff on the “Columbia Suicide Severity Rating Scale.”
- Developed Depression Screening & Major Depression Clinical Practice Guideline (CPG).
- Optimized Epic® to support depression screening and remission workflows.
- Launched revisions to the Depression Healthy Planet® registry with index dates and remission windows.
- Developed and launched “Depression Toolkit Roadshow”.
- Offered “Mental Health First Aid” training to over 800 employees.

Results
- System-wide Depression Remission performance improvement was achieved in 2018.
  - 6-months performance increased from 8.02% to 11.44%
  - 12-month performance increased from 7.45% to 10.04%
- 67% of our Comprehensive Primary Care Plus (CPC+) clinics scored at or above the 70th percentile on Depression Screening and follow-up.
- All of our CPC+ clinics scored at or above the 70th percentile on Depression Utilization of the PHQ-9 Tool for their 2018 Performance Based Incentive Program (PBIP).

Adoption considerations
- EMR optimization is essential.
- Team-based approach is most successful.

Recommendations for sustaining the gains
- Consistent deployment of identification and outreach windows.
- Data transparency.
- Continue to identify care team members (clinical and non-clinical) who can support workflows.
- Integrate more collaborative behavioral health services into primary care.