CPCPracticeSpotlight78

Comprehensive Primary Care is an initiative of the Center for Medicare & Medicaid Innovation

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CPC Change Driver 1: Comprehensive Primary Care Functions

- 1.1: Access and Continuity
- 1.3: Risk-Stratified Care Management
- 1.5: Care Coordination across the Medical Neighborhood

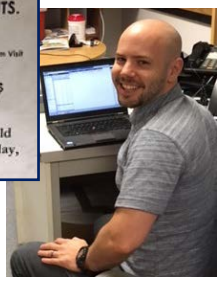
Manage Care Coordination with Teamwork, Persistence and Technological Support

Farmingdale Family Practice, Farmingdale, NJ; independent; 2 physicians, 1 APRN; 11,358 patients

Situation: The culture at **Farmingdale Family Practice (FFP)** emphasizes collaborative teaming and shared responsibility. While always evolving, the adopted processes are effective in providing patients with seamless coordinated care, according to FFP team members.

Suraiya (Sue) Sultana (left), Toni Crispino (center) and Maite Fuentes (right) review FFP's policy manual together as part of the practice's cross-training strategy.

Innovation: Teamwork is not left to chance at FFP—it's a norm, outlined in the practice's policy manual that all new employees must review. Mandatory cross training helps team members better understand each other's workloads and helps them see how their efforts lead to FFP's success in reaching its goals. Making collaboration a clear expectation contributes to FFP's reputation for being "relentless" in meeting its patients' needs. According to **Louann Hillegass**, practice manager, at least three other characteristics describe FFP's culture and help the practice manage care coordination:



Care coordinator Daniel Martinez creates single-theme posters for display in exam rooms. The posters are part of FFP's patient education effort and reinforce the message the practice wants to convey.

Fearlessly Diligent — Care coordinator **Daniel Martinez, LPN,** enjoys being "the go-to person" for patients. Beyond hospital and ED follow-ups, Martinez scours his community for helpful, often free, resources to share with patients, such as where they can obtain medical equipment or find dietary advice. After one patient was treated for anxiety—he was overwhelmed by his duties as a caregiver—Martinez found several local agencies that could assist the patient in caring for his elderly family members. Martinez also gained login credentials for the EMR portals at two area hospitals*, better ensuring continuity of care if patients forget to name FFP as their primary practice.

Mutually Supportive — FFP uses a team-based approach to deliver care, which is why cross training is so important. If his colleagues are busy, Martinez can help with intake and rooming. Likewise, **Toni Crispono**, senior front desk patient representative, **Lynn Brower**, **CMA**, and **Susan Perrone**, **CMA**, know what kind of data to share with Martinez so he can help patients arrange for appropriate tests or services. Additionally, the team meets monthly with the practice's lead physician to set long-term goals. On a day-to-day basis, the team huddles to address more immediate challenges, such as ensuring that release forms are obtained during check in. At all meetings, every team member can contribute, "from the administrative person to the clinical," says Martinez.

IT Inclusive — At FFP, those who work in information technology (IT) are fully integrated into collaborative culture and have been a part of all monthly and quarterly quality and procedural meetings since the inception of CPC. The value of making IT integral to the team became clear when the practice wanted to alter the workflow and documentation fields in its EHR. Such customization is usually cost-prohibitive. Fortunately, "we had someone with a deep understanding of the software and CPC requirements," says Hillegass. As a result, the EHR now feature custom reportable fields, based on front desk, medical assistant, and provider workflows. These fields allow team members to set goals and track progress, and create system-wide notifications that help FFP "close the loop" when the patient is in the office.

Input from IT was critical in improving the patient experience *outside* the office, too. When patient survey results revealed that few patients knew how to access care after hours, FFP sought to increase awareness through website announcements and patient portal bulletins, as well as on-hold messaging. The message was clear and consistent: patients should always call the practice first with their health care concerns, regardless of the hour. This information blitz resulted in a 30-percent jump in patients stating, when surveyed, that they understood how to obtain after-hours care. What's more, because providers were given access to the EHR via their home computers, notepads, iPads and phones, they "truly have 24/7 access to patient information, no matter where they are," says Hillegass.

Continuity of Care: Through teamwork, persistence and technological prowess, FFP has become a leader in primary care, always striving, says Martinez, to provide seamless care. He adds that he and his colleagues understand that their primary responsibility is to "make sure patients have what they need to stay healthy."

** Martinez's ability to secure timely notification from local hospitals has been made easier by CPC multi-stakeholder engagement activities in New Jersey. The New Jersey Hospital Association has offered guidance on how to facilitate timely two-way communication between practices and hospitals that helps secure the continuum of care for patients.*

For more information about the CPC initiative, visit http://innovation.cms.gov/initiatives/Comprehensive-Primary-Care-Initiative/.

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