CPCPracticeSpotlight38

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

Patient Engagement Matters

De Queen Family Practice, De Queen, Arkansas; independent; 1 physician, 1 NP; 3,500 patients

This interview was recorded at the Arkansas Learning Session, Nov. 13, 2014.

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This strategy addresses these drivers:

CPC Change Driver 1: Comprehensive Primary Care Functions

- 1.4: Patient and Caregiver Engagement

Change Driver 3: Continuous Improvement Driven by Data

- 3.1: Internal Measurement and Review

Change Driver 4: Optimal Use of Health IT

- 4.1: Continuous Improvement of HIT

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

I'm Angie Walker. I'm office manager for Dr. Randy Walker, and we're located in southwest Arkansas, De Queen, Arkansas. We have a physician, a nurse practitioner and of course support staff. We provide care to approximately 3,500 residents there, and we offer lab services, radiological; pretty much you know anything that we can do to take care of our patient.

Why was your practice interested in the CPC initiative? We're always looking for a challenge, and so I like the idea of it. We were starting to get bored with medicine, bored with what was going on, and so this is a way for us to ratchet it up both for patients and for the providers and for our staff. And so we were just very excited about that. Any time you can offer more or be more to your patient or your customer you have to jump at those opportunities.

What was new to you in CPC? Mine's probably going to be patient experience and satisfaction. I had never really given a thought to engaging the patient, sending the patient a postcard, sending the patient a reminder; it just never dawned on me. I just thought the provider told them when to come back, and they came back. And so we started slow. We started sending out a few mailers, and we're really excited about the way that patients grasped it and then actually made those appointments or took care of that preventative service. Also, you know we sent out that first survey and I thought oh this is not going to fly. And we sent out 1,300 surveys, and got 900 responses, and so we were just floored. And so we knew at that point that patients were engaged; they were just waiting on us. And so that kind of spiraled into okay, we've got to do more. We've got to get them, you know. We've got to start texting them. We've got to email. You know we've got to do something. And so we did that for the last year in our EMR, and then found that it just wasn't doing enough as far as the patient engagement portion of it, and did a rip and replace and had found one that's very engaging with the patient and love it. We also do our patient advisory board. You know I'd never really thought about asking the patient you know what they thought or what they wanted. We have 18 members that are both patients and stakeholders in the community; they represent different professions: pharmacy, teacher, nurse. And it's wonderful; I have guinea pigs, and so we meet a couple of times a year and we let them know what we're doing; where we're moving towards, and then we give them the opportunity to speak freely and say yes I like that service or no I don't, or you know basically anything that comes out of our clinic before it goes to our patient population it goes through them first. And so we're able to gauge that reaction, and so it's nice.

How you share survey results with your patients? We work closely with our local community college, and so they help us with the surveys. We distribute the surveys. They take them in, and then they do the results. We then put those into run sheets you know within Excel. We'll design a flyer or a postcard or something like that. That'll get mailed out to the patient. We'll also post it on either our Facebook or website and kind of gear them towards looking at it. They're in the office at the checkout window, so they can pick it up and take it with them when they go. We mail it in their statements, or if we're going to mail a reminder or something like that it goes with them as well.

What changes has your practice made based on this feedback? One of them was going to be access. You know our big question was, "Have you ever called our office and had an emergency and were unable to be seen?" And of course, you know we had feedback that yes, we did. You know we have an access issue. And so we went back and we took the nurse practitioner. We took some of her schedule and made it same day only. We then took one spot for every hour of Dr. Walker's schedule and said no this is for same-day only. And so we make sure our patients understand that we do have same-day access. We also do the 24/7 access where they have access to a nurse after hours, and so she has that at her disposal as well. And so if that patient calls and says, "You know I think I'm, you know I'm sick. I don't really—I don't know if in need to go to the emergency room or not." she has those appointments at her disposal, and so she can also help that patient make a good decision about whether going to the ER is appropriate or just coming in the next morning is more appropriate. Probably one of the other ones was communication. Our initial survey said you know that they really didn't receive a lot of communication from our office, and it was true they got no communication from our office because we simply didn't think about it. And so we've kind of been watching that over the last couple of months, and we're seeing of course those numbers are going up because we're probably communicating them to death now. But you know it's exciting. You know you love it and so now we're at the point where we're like, "Okay are we're sending you too much stuff?" And so far it's no, but you know we're going to have to get some kind of a schedule as far as how many times we send something out. So, but I mean, so far they love it.

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