Health Care Providers and the Promotion of Evidence Based Self-Management Programs: Stories from the Field

Questions and Answers

Question 1:
Do you bill Medicare for participation in the evidence based programs?

Answer:
Unfortunately, you cannot. As a stand-alone code, that type of reimbursement is not available for evidence based programs. Reimbursement may be possible if it was incorporated as part of your group visit. Although it is being done sporadically across the country and it parts of New York State, it is not feasible for most organizations.

Question 2:
What have been your outcomes with the Patient Activation Measure? Does that seem to increase registration and retention?

Answer:
The Patient Activation Measure (PAM) is a measure of the patient’s willingness to accept responsibility and their confidence in their ability to change their lifestyle. Currently, the use of PAM is being piloted with patients to increase their level of comfort and familiarity with the measurement system. PAM has the potential to be used as a screening tool that could positively impact registration and retention numbers in the future.

Question 3:
How would you recommend community based organizations approach practices to partner for referral?

Answer:
It is important that the practice you hope to partner with receives information about your program. Take the time to address the information to individual providers within a practice, this ensures that the information will either make it to their mailbox or their desk. Even if the provider passes off the information to a nurse or another medical professional, it is one additional person who has learned about your program and may follow up with you.
**Question 4:**
What advice do you have for community organizations and public health in other areas who want to build better linkages with health care providers?

**Answer:**
Community organizations and other areas of Public Health may consider investing in health information exchanges to develop linkages with health care providers. For instance, several hospital systems and physician offices with electronic health records are connected to Healthy Link, which is the regional health information organization for the state. By participating in these networks, public health organizations can increase their exposure to health care providers.

**Question 5:**
How important is the feedback to the physician regarding a patient who has completed the program and perhaps cuing them into looking at outcomes pre and post referral and participation, how important is that feedback?

**Answer:**
This typically varies by physician. Some physicians do not track patient outcomes and are satisfied just with patient participation in the program. Other physicians’ prefer following up with patients after completing a program. By following up with a patient, it gives the physician to check in with the patient to review their progress and to provide support as the patient makes lifestyle changes. Regardless of whether or not a physician decides to follow up with a patient, it is important that the physician as the opportunity to review the patient’s information.

**Question 6:**
What is CCHN?

**Answer:**
CCHN is the Chautauqua County Health Network. CCHN is one of the designated rural health networks in NYS, a title they share with 31 additional organizations across the state. They are unique for their partnerships with Independent Practice Associations (IPA) and for their focus on the clinical component of care.

**Question 7:**
How did you find a practice that uses an EHR and also the HIE to create the bi-directional referral process?

**Answer:**
According to 2013 data, at least 60% of family medicine providers utilize an EHR. Use of an EHR is more common in larger multi-physician practices, than in practices with fewer physicians. By reaching out to practices, you may determine who has an EHR and access to a HIE. Through HIEs, such as Healthy Link, there is an option for secure messaging which can allow for secure referral.
**Question 8:**
What suggestions or ideas do you have regarding increasing retention rates?

**Answer:**
*There are several ways to increase retention rates. First, it is important to screen patients to ensure that the appropriate patients are entering the program. Additionally, improved communication between program leaders and physicians is needed to provide physicians with feedback on the status of their patients. Retention is also dependent on factors such as program location, the time it is offered and the program leader. Participant feedback is necessary to improve retention rates and ensure the future success of the program.*