Engaging Primary Care Networks to Enhance Treatment for Tobacco Use and Dependence*

Carol Ripley-Moffitt, MDiv, CTTS; Jacqueline R Halladay, MD, MPH; Sachin Gupta MD; Christine O’Meara MD; Adam O Goldstein, MD, MPH

1. Nicotine Dependence Program, Department of Family Medicine, UNC School of Medicine; 2. Department of Family Medicine, UNC School of Medicine, Sheps Center, 3. Rex/UNC Panther Creek Family Practice

Background

- Adherence to clinical practice guidelines for treating tobacco use can improve patient care and quit rates, yet
  - Tobacco cessation counseling offered to patients who use tobacco in only 20.9% of physician office visits;
  - Cessation medication ordered in only 7.6% of visits
- Adoption of a tobacco registry/decision support tool at UNC Family Medicine Center resulted in significant increases in medication orders & tobacco treatment referrals
- Could a similar decision support tool increase evidence-based tobacco use treatment in a non-academic setting?

Approach

Chronic Care Model guided intervention and tool design

- Informed, activated patient
- Prepared, proactive team
- High-quality care, satisfying encounters, & improved outcomes

- Engaged UNC Physicians Network to identify a clinic among 36 community practices:
  - Rex/UNC Family Practice of Panther Creek in Cary, NC
  - 2 MDs, 2 LPNs, 2 front desk staff, & office manager
  - 3,300 annual visits
  - 26 patients/mo, who smoke/use tobacco
- Low touch, minimally-disruptive intervention:
  - Needs assessment
    - Readiness to Implement assessment
    - Individual online surveys: attitudes, knowledge, and practice
    - Group interview: current approach, barriers, potential strategies
  - Six “lunch and learn” meetings with entire clinic staff

- Pharmacotherapy webinar for physicians across NC
- Designed and/or implemented tools to
  - Clarify roles/click flow using quality improvement approach to develop feasible standard processes
  - Assess patient readiness to talk with provider about tobacco use
  - Assist patients with self-management support tool
  - Refer patients to NC Quitline

Results – Process Measures & Feedback

- Patient Readiness Assessments completed at about half of visits
  - Assessments increased provider confidence in offering, documenting, and billing for counseling
- Follow-up staff interviews
  - Provider attitude shift about value of cessation meds
  - I actually used to feel that feeling patients to use the patch, gum, or the lozenge was kind of a copout. I didn’t think it had a very high quit rate. But knowing now that it actually is the best way with therapy, it doesn’t feel like I’m being lazy in getting them to quit.
  - Change in context of provider-patient discussions
  - Desire for shorter, more staff specific training sessions
- Office manager champion for disseminating to other practices

Limitations

- EHR data not structured for research
  - Referral and SMS documentation functionality built, but not ultimately of high value for implementation
- Impact of EPIC transformation
  - Resources for changing current AIs and scripts application limited, but hope to use for input with EPIC

Conclusions

- As US health care systems create new networks of providers, results of this low touch pragmatic intervention (e.g., increased documented counseling 60% & cessation medication 120%) demonstrate potential for improvements in the delivery of evidence-based care for patients who use tobacco.
- This interventions aligns with the practice networks’ enhanced quality improvement (e.g. Meaningful Use & Patient Centered Medical Home), a WIN-WIN-WIN for networks, providers, & patients

Next Steps

- Adding the patient voice to the intervention design via creation of practice advisory panels

Acknowledgements

The authors wish to thank for following for their contributions to this project: Morgan Ellington, Jennifer Rees, Jennifer Leeman, Bryan Weiner, Wilson Gabbard & the Panther Creek staff, Jan Hutchins, Robert De JMP, Tim Dion, & the HeNC staff.

* This program was supported by Health-e-NC, an initiative of the University Cancer Research Fund at the University of North Carolina (UNC) at Chapel Hill. The authors have no conflicts of interest to report.