Data Are Key In Care For Patients With HIV/AIDS

Many thanks for shining such a strong spotlight in the March 2014 issue on the underserved populations with HIV/AIDS and those in jails and prisons. This is where health care hits the streets.

There is much talk about new population health management techniques and making our vast arrays of clinical data actually usable. I am excited to report that we are finding ways to do it—we are making a difference for our patients. The AIDS Resource Center of Wisconsin (ARCW) is pioneering the use of advanced population health management technologies to drive quality improvement for people living with HIV/AIDS.

What have we learned? Data are the key.

Here’s the real problem: As more patients with HIV achieve durable suppression of their condition, it is essential that providers improve the care of the patients’ other chronic medical conditions. But the data currently available to providers and administrators on the care of non-HIV-related chronic disease are fragmented, and high-risk populations are not readily identified. Until very recently, access by providers to clean, usable clinical data in the management of HIV and non-HIV-related chronic medical conditions has been elusive.

Working with Forward Health Group, a technology vendor, the ARCW is making significant process improvements that are driven by the availability of timely and precise patient data. For example, during just nine months, cervical cancer screenings during routine Pap smears increased from 40.6 percent to more than 78.0 percent. Across the country, significant numbers of patients with HIV remain out of care, and only about one in four are successfully managing their condition and maintaining an undetectable viral load. Here at the ARCW, 82 percent are hitting that threshold.

Why? We’re becoming data-driven. Thanks again for a wonderful issue.

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