

Community and Hospital Response to the Opioid Epidemic

OHSU Hospital – Portland, OR

Background

Oregon Health & Science University (OHSU) is a non-profit academic medical center in the urban area of Portland. It is a member of the Healthy Columbia Willamette Collaborative (HCWC), a large public/private partnership among 15 hospitals, four health departments and two coordinated care organizations in Clackamas, Multnomah and Washington Counties of Oregon and Clark County, Washington. This unique public/private partnership aims for stronger relationships between communities, coordinated care organizations, hospitals and public health; meaningful community health needs assessments; and results in a platform for collaboration around health improvement plans and activities that leverage collective resources to improve the health and wellbeing of our communities.

The United States is in the midst of an opioid epidemic. A Portland area community health needs assessment showed that opioid misuse is a priority area of community health need. The HCWC brought together member organizations to discuss ways to address opioid misuse in the area. In 2014, a Community Health Improvement Team (C-HIT) composed of content experts was formed to develop work plans and evaluation protocols to address opioid prescribing.

Additionally, OHSU has created a novel inpatient addiction medicine resource to help expand resources for hospitalized patients who are struggling with substance use disorders.

Program Overview

The HCWC C-HIT strategies to prevent opioid misuse include:

- Adoption by HCWC member organizations of an opioid prescribing community standard for chronic, non-cancer related pain;
- Implementation by HCWC member organizations of opioid-prescribing monitoring practices; and
- Development and implementation of provider and patient education about chronic pain and prescription opioids.

By employing these strategies, HCWC aims to reduce the rate of opioid-related deaths in the HCWC region. It is anticipated that overall declines in opioid-related death rates will take years to realize.

OHSU's Improving Addiction Care Team (IMPACT) is an interprofessional care team designed to address the needs of adults hospitalized with substance use disorder. The team is composed of an addiction medicine physician, an addiction-treated medical social worker, a peer recovery mentor, and community liaisons from addiction medicine providers in the community.

Post-acute care linkages include methadone, suboxone, and outpatient group treatment in the Portland metro area and across the state. IMPACT also includes a novel model of Medically Enhanced Residential Treatment that will integrate long-term intravenous antibiotics and residential addiction care for adults needing long-term infusion and residential addiction care.

Impact

Results of the community and hospital efforts are pending. Expected results are reduced health care utilization and hospital lengths of stay, improved staff communication, decreased non-productive staff time, improved pain treatment, decreased opioid overdose deaths or near-deaths, and improved staff and provider satisfaction.

From July 1, 2015, to June 15, 2016, 237 patients were referred for IMPACT services; IMPACT worked with 218 inpatients; 124 patients received medication-assisted treatment in the hospital; and 131 patients were referred to community addiction treatment.

Lessons Learned

A community can come together to reach consensus around safe opioid prescribing. Improved access to addiction medicine treatments is needed in addition to restrictions of opioid medications. The inpatient setting is a particularly important time to engage patients in discussions about treating substance use disorders.

Future Goals

Plans include provider education about safe opioid prescribing; provider education about treatments for opioid use disorders; community engagement and consensus around these topics; and expansion of and rapid access to medication-assisted treatments.

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