

THE Value Initiative

Members in Action: Improve Quality & Patient Outcomes

Presbyterian Healthcare Services – Albuquerque, NM

Holistic Partnership Improves Outcomes for Patients with Substance Use Disorders

The AHA's Members in Action series highlights how hospitals and health systems are implementing new value-based strategies to improve health care affordability. This includes work to redesign the delivery system, manage risk and new payment models, improve quality and outcomes, and implement operational solutions.

Overview

Presbyterian Healthcare Services (PHS) started a statewide partnership, called **The Substance Use Disorder and Community Collaborative Initiative**, in 2017 to deliver compassionate, high-quality, evidence-based care for patients with substance use disorder (SUD). Changing the culture of treating patients with SUD as any other chronic condition, devoid of judgment, is a key element of the approach.

Here are some of the initiative's features:

- An integrated in-patient addictions medicine consult liaison team provides consultations for patients who are hospitalized for any reason. The team includes a physician, nurse practitioner, physician assistant and a peer support specialist, who offers recovery support and works with patients to identify resources throughout the state.
- PHS provides education to clinicians across New Mexico – in addition to those at PHS – focusing on identifying and treating individuals with SUD. Such training is often not included in medical school curriculum. Through these trainings, providers learn about treatment options such



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Impact

As of January 2019, 173 New Mexico providers had completed the PHS training to prescribe buprenorphine to treat opioid-use disorder and chronic pain. PHS also trained 300 providers on Centers for Disease Control and Prevention guidelines for safer opioid prescribing.

From 2017 to 2018, prescriptions for buprenorphine increased by 50 percent. In addition, PHS providers decreased prescriptions for opioids by 16 percent while also dispensing more morphine-equivalent medications in a safer range. In 2018, PHS also tripled the amount of naloxone prescribed as a universal precaution in the event of opioid overdoses.

as medication, talk therapy and intensive outpatient treatment. Trainings include no-cost continuing education on chronic pain management, safer opioid prescribing and certification to prescribe Suboxone for patients who overuse opioids.

- Clinicians across the state are privy to weekly virtual meetings that provide mentorship and support for treating patients with addiction and chronic pain. New Mexico is a large rural state and these video conferences help clinicians learn how to manage their patients locally, which enhances the patient experience and the continuity of their care.
- PHS universally screens patients for tobacco and alcohol use and will soon begin universal screening for problematic opioid use. Patients with SUD are often higher utilizers of medical care and may have co-morbidities, such as cardiovascular disease, uncontrolled diabetes, depression or anxiety, and so they require a holistic approach to their care. In addition, PHS runs an opioid stewardship program in which it gives direct feedback to providers on their use of opioids and non-opioid medications in treating pain. This helps providers to define standards for opioid prescribing, to monitor opioid practice and to reduce variation.
- PHS has built partnerships with faith-based organizations, churches and other SUD providers throughout the state. For example: local pastors are trained on how to recognize signs of SUD and where to refer parishioners for treatment.



Daniel Duhigg, D.O., an addiction psychiatrist and medical director for behavioral health at PHS, said providers feel empowered once they are trained in the tools for treating substance use disorder.

Lessons Learned

PHS officials say their primary positive takeaway has been witnessing providers' enthusiasm once they have the tools to treat SUD.

"Healthcare providers get really excited," said Daniel Duhigg, D.O., an addiction psychiatrist and medical director for behavioral health at PHS. "They don't feel powerless any more. That's been an amazing and rewarding lesson learned."

Future Goals

In 2019, PHS is expanding SUD training beyond primary care and hospitalists to specialty care, obstetrics and pediatrics. PHS is also customizing the training to meet the needs of communities around the state and offering it to other hospitals in New Mexico.

"There is still work to do," said Duhigg. "I think it's going to translate into better patient engagement and better outcomes."

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