

THE Value Initiative

Members in Action: Implement Operational Solutions

Inova Health System – Falls Church, Va.

Focus on High-Value Care Improves Outcomes and Value

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

Inova Health System is involved in an interdisciplinary effort to create value by reducing services that provide little or no clinical value to patients. Inova began the initiative after determining in 2015 the system had significant cost variation when compared with 1,200 other hospitals.

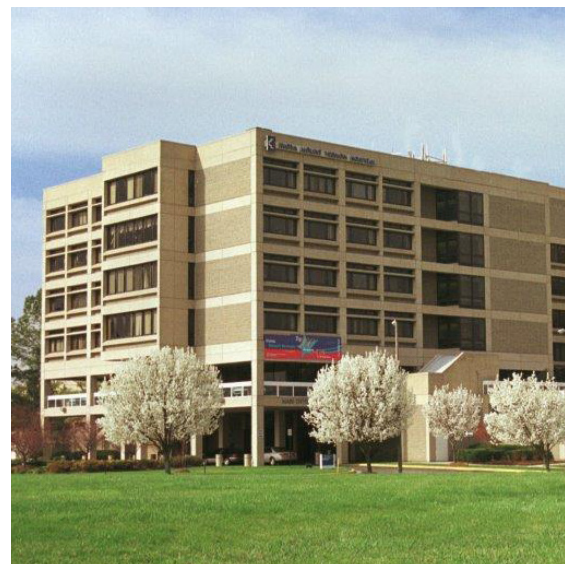
A clinical effectiveness department was established with the goal of standardizing care based on sound evidence-based practices in an environment that is safe and free of unacceptable risk in a culture of continuous improvement. "Since then, multiple projects have been rolled out with a focus on minimizing clinical variation and improving quality of care for our patients," said Sonali Pakala, senior director for quality, clinical effectiveness and outcomes.

In 2018, a team comprising of surgeons, anesthesiologists, nurses, and team members from information technology, quality and patient registration began focusing on reducing low-value care in pre-surgical testing. After reviewing the literature and recommended clinical standards, templates were developed for a variety of medical conditions to guide clinicians on appropriate administration of tests and procedures.

Prompts in the electronic medical record provide recommendations to physicians on care options. For example, patients about to undergo cataract surgery no longer automatically have electrocardiograms, chest X-rays and lab tests. Information on best practices is also disseminated through presentations to medical staff and visits to physicians' offices by physician relations team members.

Impact

The standardized pre-surgical testing processes have resulted in more streamlined workflow and less confusion for patients and caregivers as to what tests are needed, reducing surgery delays and procedure cancellations. Targeting testing to the patient and procedure needs was a welcome change, and partnering with primary care providers supported the overall management of patients after their procedures.



Lessons Learned

Inova officials advise engaging stakeholders early in the planning process, sharing results along the way and revising clinical processes based on feedback.

“Our providers are changing practice patterns in a significant way,” said John Moynihan, M.D., chair of the surgery department. “The frustration and confusion around appropriate testing have been completely removed from our process.”



Future Goals

Inova is beginning to collaborate with five other Virginia health systems in a three-year pilot, called Smarter Care Virginia, to reduce utilization of seven selected procedures considered low value. In addition to preoperative testing for low-risk surgery, the collaborative will focus on avoiding routine cardiac testing, reducing eye imaging for patients without eye symptoms and reducing the utilization of PICC lines for patients with chronic kidney disease.

“By participating in Virginia Center for Health Innovation’s Smarter Care Virginia project, we will have the opportunity to enhance our existing capabilities in this area,” said Neeta Goel, M.D., medical director of quality and population health. “We will be collaborating with physicians at several health organizations to share and learn best practice strategies to further improve our outcomes.”

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