Using the EHR for Care Management and Tracking

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Learning Objectives

- Learn why it is important to have good tracking mechanisms in place
- Recognize the tracking tools currently available
- Identify key areas to track
- Identify the ways to measure the effectiveness of tracking
Why Is It Important to Create, Monitor, and Maintain Tracking Mechanisms?

Reasons for Tracking Mechanisms

- Improve patient care and patient rapport
- Reduce missed or delayed diagnoses
- Increase patient communication
- Maximize electronic health record (EHR) technology
- Achieve external recognition (patient centered medical home [PCMH])
- Mitigate malpractice risk
Communication with Ms. Key

- Mammogram results not communicated to Ms. Key
- Dr. Derm’s office did not communicate results of biopsy to Dr. Smith; possibly delays treatment for Ms. Key
- Determine why Ms. Key did not follow up with dermatologist

Challenges to Tracking

- Large number of patients with complex medical conditions
- Fragmentation of healthcare delivery
- Co-management of complex conditions
- Volume of referrals/tests/hospitalizations
- Cumbersome and time consuming
- Limited staff
What Areas Are Important to Track?

Key Areas to Track Include

- Referrals and consults
- Hospital admissions
- ED visits
- Diagnostic testing
Other Areas for Tracking

- Medically-complex patients
- Missed appointments
- Prescription compliance
- Patient engagement
- Preventative care
- Vaccinations

What Is Needed for Tracking?
Tools for Tracking

- Logs
- EHRs
- Policies and procedures
- Staff education
- Open communication

Tracking Policy

- Ensure that tracking policy is current
- Confirm policy is fully implemented by staff
- Educate new staff on policy
- Communicate policy updates or revisions to all staff,
What Is Important in Managing Referral Tracking?

Important Aspects of Managing Referrals

- Monitor availability and access to specialist appointments
- Educate the providers on how to manage (and document) non-compliant patients
- Know what specialists see patients with particular insurance
Referral Tracking

- Educate providers on tracking referrals
- Create a centralized communication system
- Follow up with patients after 30-60 days from the date the referral was made
- Notify the provider who made the referral if the patient has chosen NOT to follow through with the referral

Referral Tracking

- Use interfacing electronic records to allow easy referral and order form completion
- Create a “check out” procedure for patients to get assistance with scheduling referral before they leave the office
- Print out information sheets with telephone number and address of referral office
What Items Should Be Included in Tracking Policies?

Elements for a Referral Tracking Policy

- Every referral goes into a tracking log (paper or electronic)
- Specify targets for each type of referral (urgent, routine, and patient requested)
- Identify contingency plans (what if’s)
- Pinpoint referral follow-up and who is accountable
- Address patient non-compliance in referrals
- Document appropriately
Elements of a Hospitalization Tracking Policy

- Establish a tracking and monitoring system for receiving hospital admission information
- Collect patient information, date of visit or admission, date of notification, reason for visit, documentation received, and documentation requested
- Identify who is responsible for receiving admission information
- Implement a mechanism for follow up with the patient, provider, or outside facility to request pertinent information

Elements of an ED/Urgent Care Tracking Policy

- Educate patients about providing contacts for their primary care provider to ED and Urgent Care centers
- Centralize responsibility for monitoring and following up with outside facilities
- Coordinate care recommendations and follow-up with patients
- Document appropriately
Elements to Include in Diagnostic Test Tracking

- Track all ordered tests
- Assign specific staff members to monitor the test tracking logs
- Include fail-safe contingency plans (what if’s)
- Ensure that the need for follow-up is stressed and who is accountable
- Periodically audit results to be sure that the providers have reviewed and initialed them

Additional Considerations in Test Tracking

- Communicate every test (including normal results) to patients
- Specify time frame targets for communicating each type of result (critical, abnormal and normal)
- Document patient notification in the chart
- Document patient decisions not to undergo recommended tests and that patients have been informed of the risks
Why Is Tracking Beneficial?

Benefits of Tracking and Using EHRs for Tracking

- Improved health outcomes
- Continual quality improvement
- Increased patient satisfaction
- Reduced liability
- Automated work processes
- Mechanism to track
Benefits of Tracking Achieved by Measurement

\[
\text{Completed referrals} \times 100 = \text{Obtain the \% of referrals}
\]
\[
\text{Total referrals made}
\]

- Identify the status of the referral (cancelled, complete, no show, no appointment made)
- Track monthly, quarterly, or at some specific time interval
- Monitor over time
- Note improvements or areas that require additional focus

Measuring and Monitoring

- Determine number of referrals by provider during a given timeframe
- Identify the referrals that require follow-up (helps identify care coordination issues)
- Centralize responsibility and identify staff to conduct follow-up
- Make appointments in coordination with patients
- Provide appropriate records to consultants which improves communication
Would Ms. Key’s Care Have Improved With Additional Tracking?

- Barriers to clinical care
- Medically complex patients
- Missed appointments

Did the Health Center Recognize Ms. Key as a High-Risk Patient?
Characteristics of the High-Risk Patient

- Number of issues
- Identified chronic conditions (e.g., diabetes, heart failure, cancer)
- Acute conditions that require monitoring
- Social or behavioral issues that complicate care
  - Transportation issues
  - Erratic work schedules
  - Language difficulties and/or cultural considerations

Measurement

- Process for recognizing high-risk patients
  - Electronic systems
  - Measurement: determine how many high-risk patients are in your practice
How Can You Accommodate High-Risk Patients?

Should You Consider...

- Are patient discharge summary sheets available in multiple languages?
- Were patient education materials printed out in host language and at appropriate reading level?
- Are translation services available?
- Are you referring patients to offices that can also accommodate these patients?
Are You Effectively Using Feedback Loops?

Examples of Areas Where Feedback Loops Are Beneficial

- EHRs facilitate feedback loops (e.g., sent 2 prescriptions—were they received by the pharmacy?)
- Outside consultants (e.g., request for biopsy results sent to dermatology office)
What Are Some Other Advantages of Using the EHR?

EHRs Can Make Information Available

- Reduce medical errors
- Decrease the number of repeated or unnecessary tests
- Improve information flow
- Allow providers to have information about other conditions that they may not be directly treating
- Create alerts in the EHR for preventative care
Avoid Medication Errors

► According to ONC, the 2013 National Ambulatory Medical Care Physician Workflow Survey found that three times the number of physicians reported that their EHRs helped them avoid a medication error
► Almost 70% said that lab and medication reminders or alerts aided them in preventing potential patient harm
► 45% reported a specific EHR feature that had alerted them to a possible medication error
► EHRs also helped twice as many physicians choose the correct lab test

Additional Benefits

► Use e-prescriptions to decrease errors from handwriting
► Check for drug-drug/drug-allergy interactions
► Provide alerts and reminders
► Decrease wait time for medications sent electronically to the pharmacy
► Use clinical decision support (protocols, best practices, condition-specific orders and tests)
Summary

- EHRs are becoming prominent tools for tracking
- Clinical tracking
  - Improves care quality
  - Decreases duplication
  - Aids in communication
  - Increases patient satisfaction
- Key areas to track are referrals, hospitalizations, ED visits, referrals, and consults, along with other areas specific to your facility
- Measuring evaluates effectiveness and improvement

Clinical Risk Management Resources

- Test Tracking and Follow-Up Toolkit
- Special Report: Test Tracking and Follow-Up
- Hospital Admission and Emergency Visit Log
- Sample Policy Guide: Tracking Hospital and Emergency Room Visits
- Tracking Hospitalizations: Patient Card and Procedures
- Archived Webinar: Getting on the Right Track: Tracking Test Results, No-Show Appointments, and Hospital Visits
- Archived Webinar: Building and Maintaining an Effective Triage System
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References


References

References

- AHRQ, Using Health Information Technology to Support Quality Improvement in Primary Care, https://pcmh.ahrq.gov/sites/default/files/attachments/Using%20Health%20IT%20Technology%20to%20Support%20QI.pdf