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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?



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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

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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

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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

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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

MISSED APPOINTMENT
On _____

Medical Prescription	
Name of the patient: _____	
Date of birth: _____	Age: _____
Contact Details: _____ (provide complete contact details of a patient)	
Date: _____ (Indicate the date on which the prescription is being written)	
Dispensed with: _____ (Name of the doctor that the patient is suffering from)	
Blood pressure: _____ Pulse rate: _____	
Drug: _____	Unit (tablets, capsules or drops): _____ (Indicate the name)
Examination to be done (if any): _____ (Indicate the name of the examination that a patient needs to do)	
Things to follow: _____ (Indicate if there are any health regimen a patient needs to follow regularly)	
Signature of the physician: _____	Date: _____



What Is Needed for Tracking?



Policies & Procedures

Tools for Tracking

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

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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,

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What Is Important in Managing Referral Tracking?



Important Aspects of Managing Referrals

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

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



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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

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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

$\frac{\text{Completed referrals}}{\text{Total referrals made}} \times 100 = \text{Obtain the \% of referrals}$

- ▶ 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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