

CentraCare Health System Creates New Tools to Treat Tobacco Dependence

Between October 2010 and June 2012, ClearWay MinnesotaSM provided the CentraCare Health Foundation with funding and technical assistance to further incorporate best-practice tobacco dependence treatment within CentraCare primary care clinics.

During the 21-month grant period, the CentraCare team developed best-practice tobacco user identification, documentation, brief intervention and referral tools within CentraCare's electronic medical records system to help facilitate care and treatment of tobacco dependence.



Concurrent with tobacco systems change efforts, the CentraCare Health System committed resources to provide employees and their dependents with tobacco cessation treatment coverage, further prioritizing tobacco dependence treatment throughout the system and serving as a model for other employers in the region.

CENTRACARE Clinic

ClearWaySM
MINNESOTA

New “smart sets” improve treatment

Support from ClearWay Minnesota allowed CentraCare to develop and implement a tobacco cessation treatment order set within CentraCare’s electronic medical record system (EMR).

The new tobacco “smart set” allows clinicians to pull up a list of FDA-approved tobacco cessation medications, tailor medication dosage to tobacco users based on the latest medication guidelines and send prescriptions to selected pharmacies.

Additionally, the new order set allows clinicians to view and refer patients to external and internal cessation treatment options. Clinicians can refer patients to the CentraCare Heart and Vascular Center’s Nicotine Dependence Program, to a Certified Tobacco Treatment Specialist (CTTS) provider on staff at a CentraCare clinic, or to a tobacco quitline via fax referral.

The new order set is currently accessible to all CentraCare clinic providers, and work is underway to integrate it within St. Cloud Hospital’s EMR.

Enhanced reporting capabilities aid performance monitoring efforts

CentraCare worked closely with information technology (IT) staff to develop new EMR reporting capabilities to monitor key tobacco dependence treatment variables. These reports are used for provider performance improvement and staff training purposes.

EMR reports can now show the number of patients referred to external (e.g. quitlines) or internal counseling, the number of patients with a cessation medication recommendation, and the number of prescriptions written for medications. Information can be organized by clinic site, individual provider within a clinic and individual patient.

CentraCare’s Quality Improvement staff generates the reports and distributes them to each clinic site administrator as well as to individual providers to help them see where improvements could be made in tobacco dependence treatment (e.g., where additional training or resources may be needed).

Improvements made to the treatment of tobacco use dependence and the

ability to query this type of information will become increasingly important as more health care quality initiatives, such as the Minnesota Community Measures, include aspects of tobacco dependence treatment.

Bridging inpatient and outpatient treatment

While the original intent of the CentraCare systems-change grant was to work solely with outpatient clinics, CentraCare team members brought in staff from the affiliated St. Cloud Hospital to discuss how they could streamline tobacco dependence treatment efforts between the sites.

As a result of this collaboration, the hospital now has an educational module specific to tobacco cessation, and plans to use the new tobacco order set developed for the clinic setting. Processes have also been created within the hospital to address the majority of the Joint Commission Performance Measures associated with inpatient tobacco dependence treatment.

Currently, the CentraCare team is working on plans to coordinate cessation treatment within CentraCare's clinics after patients are discharged from the hospital.

Keys to System-Change Success

Commitment From leadership

The CentraCare team recognized that executive support would be a key to success and worked diligently to garner support for their tobacco systems-change efforts.

Dr. John Schmitz, Medical Director of Adult Psychiatry and passionate tobacco dependence treatment champion, played a key role in garnering support for tobacco systems change efforts. Dr. Schmitz met with

senior administrators, medical providers and members of CentraCare's Health Foundation Board to reinvigorate tobacco dependence treatment as a priority within the system.

Integration with other high-priority efforts

The CentraCare team recognized that tobacco systems change efforts were only one of many competing quality improvement initiatives within the

system. In order to elevate the importance of these changes, the team linked their work with that of other high-priority initiatives within the CentraCare system.

For example, treating tobacco dependence is key to more effectively

“Seven out of 10 patients that walk through your door want to quit [smoking], so why wouldn’t you want to spend the time [to provide treatment]?”

-Dr. John Schmitz, Medical Director of Adult Psychiatry

managing chronic diseases, such as diabetes and heart disease. Members of the team demonstrated to providers and administrators how treatment of tobacco dependence would help them improve on their health care quality measures and ultimately help reduce costs associated with tobacco-related illnesses.

“With the addition of Minnesota Community Measures and other [quality care] initiatives, there will be three or four entities pushing treatment of tobacco dependence.”

-Dean Moritz, Ph.D., CentraCare systems-change team member and Quality Improvement Specialist

Multi-disciplinary expertise

CentraCare established a multi-disciplinary team to work on tobacco systems-change efforts. The team included nurses, a physician champion, a pharmacist, a respiratory therapist, a physiologist from the Heart Center, a smoke-free community advocate, a quality improvement specialist, an IT specialist and a representative from the marketing department.

Engaging individuals from different disciplines benefited the project by allowing different perspectives to be voiced and considered during planning, piloting and implementation. The team has now evolved into a standing committee dedicated to driving change throughout the system.



Initiative Impact

As a result of CentraCare's systems change efforts, patients will be more likely to receive assistance quitting tobacco. The more assistance patients receive, the more likely they will attempt to quit or be able to quit successfully. Quitting tobacco use will greatly improve the health of patients, while in turn reducing costs associated with treating tobacco-related illnesses.

"Even if we never collected a penny [via reimbursement] for tobacco cessation, it will pay for itself by far down the road. . . . Your number one return on investment is with tobacco treatment"

-Dr. John Schmitz, Medical Director of Adult Psychiatry