

IT'S TIME!

CHRONIC DISEASE MANAGEMENT: PIONEER PREVENTIVE CARE WITH PRIMARIS

By now you know the reasons for changing the culture of your healthcare practice, system or other facility so that it is focused on managing chronic diseases. Chronic disease management is critical to preventing unnecessary patient hospital stays and avoid painful and costly procedures for those suffering from them, as well as maximizing the chances of keeping at-risk patients from developing such conditions in the first place. It's a necessity as the payer community begins to more aggressively reward qualitative management of populations over quantitative management, so your future lies in aligning to that model.

Doing so also is critical to the country's future: The U.S. has the most expensive healthcare system in the world, yet it ranks last among 11 industrialized countries on measures of health system quality, efficiency, access to care, equity, and healthy lives, according to a 2014 Commonwealth Fund report.

Change of this magnitude can be daunting. It requires reshaping your healthcare enterprise at both the macro- and micro-levels. Fortunately, this isn't a change that you have to make alone. Primaris has a long history of helping providers understand and address the health risk of all patient populations while focusing on high-risk patients and addressing the preventive and chronic care needs of every patient.

Its work in the field of chronic care management includes:

- At the Hannibal Clinic in Hannibal, Mo., Primaris worked with its quality committee to establish clinic-wide protocols for blood pressure and diabetes management. The diabetes management protocol requires all diabetic patients have necessary tests documented in the clinic's records. That is a big step towards using data to appropriately manage a population of patients with a chronic disease, both individually and as a group.
- Primaris is a stakeholder in the Missouri Heart Disease and Stroke Plan, engaging in objectives including increasing the number of community health care services that deliver team-based, coordinated, proactive care for people with chronic conditions, such as high blood pressure.
- As a subcontractor to the TMF Quality Innovation Network Quality Improvement Organization (QIN-QIO), Primaris supports critical efforts to accomplish better and more affordable care in the state of Missouri. Among its charges, the QIN-QIO contract aims at improving prevention efforts and helping reduce unnecessary hospital readmissions – an all too-common occurrence for those with chronic conditions – through meaningful use of health information technology. Primaris provides targeted technical assistance for the QIN-QIO's efforts and helps to drive improvement initiatives among providers and stakeholders.
- According to data released in the summer of 2014 from CMS, QIO-supported efforts (including those of Primaris) have led to a 20 percent rate of absolute improvement in blood sugar control among participating diabetics.
- Primaris assisted more than 90 physician offices in improving the quality of patient monitoring and care in order to slow the progression of Chronic Kidney Disease, improving statewide rates of urine microalbumin tests to detect kidney disease in diabetic Medicare patients by 20%.

What Primaris Can Do For You

In its consultancy role, Primaris can help you put together the business strategy required to reposition your organization's approach to providing health care with a focus on managing chronic diseases, as well as provide the operational expertise that enables you to act on that strategy. Its expertise in quality improvement, for example, will enable you to organize your workflows for the new model, both at the data and staffing levels. Its work across providers means that it not only can help you target the greatest opportunities in transitioning to a preventive care model, but also the best practices that already are being deployed by successful early adopters.

Primaris will help you mobilize your staff so that you can make the most of your resources to proactively support your efforts to manage chronic diseases, and it will help you maximize your use of electronic health records (EHR) technology to support meaningfully using the data stored within these systems towards realizing that goal. "Many organizations have EHRs in place but they don't fully know how to use the reports they're getting to manage their patient population's health," says Primaris CEO Richard A. Royer.

Primaris' expertise in chart abstraction services are a huge help in enabling providers to understand who and what they're managing – what conditions they really need to be concerned about, and increasingly, what strategies they need to take to address those concerns as their actions will influence their payments.

"What we do in the chart abstraction world is in terms of core measures, registry work, and the Group Practice Reporting Option (GPRO) for the Physician Quality Reporting System (PQRS) establishes current thresholds," Royer explains. To date, providers primarily have wanted to pull quality data out of medical records systems in order to report that data to various authorities – CMS, the Joint Commission, the American College of Cardiology, and so on. But, he says, "the next evolutionary step for clients is to say, 'Now that we know a true picture of what our quality numbers look like, where do we want to go with that, and how do we get there? How do we make the data actionable?'"

Primaris helps them on that front, by analyzing the information contained in an organization's medical records to look for quality indicators that have been defined by best practice standards and/or quality measures. Then, its experts identify patterns and trends, and offer recommendations for improvement while providing real-time feedback of performance on quality measures.

Making big cultural changes in your healthcare practice takes patience. It requires educating all involved participants. It involves extending technology deployments and analytics to the next frontier. And it all can be accomplished, especially with the help of an experienced partner.

Contact Primaris today to see how its expertise and solutions can help you make the changes you need to make.