

# IT'S TIME!

## PATIENT-CENTERED MEDICAL HOME: PRIMARIS HELPS YOU BEGIN THE JOURNEY

The goals of the [Patient-Centered Medical Home \(PCMH\)](#) are welcome for primary care doctors and patients, not to mention the healthcare system at large. As described by the National Committee for Quality Assurance (NCQA), which has the nation's largest PCMH program, the aims include having primary care serve as the foundation of a high-value health care system that provides whole-person care at the first contact. Everyone within the practice, from doctors to front-office staff, will practice to the highest level of their training and license in teams to support better access, help with self-care, and coordination across the spectrum of healthcare services and providers.

PCMHs, the NCQA also says, will show the entire health care system what patient-centered care looks like, respecting and responding to each one's preferences, needs, and values in order to guide clinical decisions. The end result, it notes, is that PCMH will revitalize the "joy of practice" in primary care, making it more attractive and satisfying.

These are wonderful goals, but they also are challenging to meet. NCQA discusses that successful practices have often needed financial or technical assistance, or both, to drive their transformations. Physicians also have had to focus hard on moving to a team-based effort; they have had to grow their reliance upon and use of health information technology; and they have had to adopt a systems approach that ensures they have the required data, standard measurements, technical assistance, leadership and personnel in place to drive their practices forward. Additionally, they either already have or are looking to put in place quality improvement systems to take their efforts to the next level.

### Taking on the Challenges

Getting help to support tasks including the digital management of a patient population and building a team approach to underpin PCMH quality requirements is a wise idea: The transformation

that will enable primary care providers to better and more efficiently captain their patients' healthcare ships clearly can be difficult and tricky.

Healthcare consulting firm Primaris is well-prepared to provide that help. For starters, it has more than ten years of experience supporting electronic medical records (EMR) deployments that are the foundation for integrating patient health information and for serving as a means of distributing important medical data instantly to all medical specialists involved in a patient's care. That's a particularly important factor when it comes to patients with chronic conditions who may receive care from multiple specialists and across a number of settings. Primaris also claims a wealth of expertise as a quality improvement specialist.

From rethinking workflows, to better capturing, analyzing and utilizing EMR data and systems, to helping deploy best practices to improve primary care doctors' collaborations with their patients and other doctors across the healthcare lifecycle, Primaris has the know-how to help a practice get started or continue its journey to PCMH certification. The knowledge that Primaris can put to work in furthering PCMH projects in all these areas – and more – is based on its extensive experiences and the talent of its in-house experts that have guided them.

Here's a quick look at a few:

- Partnering with the [Kansas Foundation for Medical Care](#), Primaris helped create a coordinated and collaborative group of 15 hospitals and more than 30 downstream providers in the Kansas City metro area, with the goal of improving a community care transitions program to reduce readmissions within 30 days. The task depends on a number of quality improvement tasks, such as enhancing methods to encourage patients to seek care from their primary care doctors before going to the ER again; improving scheduling and completing follow-up visits with primary care

doctors; ensuring the appropriate use of personal health records; and educating the patient about the medications they are taking and how to react to red flags that their condition is worsening.

“Primaris has been a major player with us,” said Trent DeVreugd, who at the time served as Director of Care Transitions for the Kansas City Quality Improvement Consortium. “They really helped pull the hospitals together and have been a great support from strategic, operational and relationship points of view.”

- During its tenure as Missouri’s federally designated Medicare Quality Improvement Organization (QIO), [Primaris also worked with electronic health records \(EHR\) systems providers to offer clinicians free assistance](#) with tasks such as establishing workflows to allow efficient and consistent data capture; identifying exactly where and how to record specific data elements for each preventive care measure; and implementing a continuous quality improvement program to improve performance rates related to the Physician’s Quality Reporting System (PQRS) program.
- For a project to improve surgical care with [Citizen’s Memorial Hospital](#), Primaris’ efforts

included fostering the use of interventions integrated into the comprehensive EMR, used in both the hospital and affiliated medical clinic settings, in order to reduce surgical site infections and better patient care. It also conducted ongoing physician, clinical, and hospital staff education/training on measure standards and “best practice” clinical references, among other work.

There’s very good reason to take advantage of Primaris’ knowledge and experience to become a PCMH practice. “The move to PCMH has many repercussions for the patient and the physician, leading to what we believe is a more satisfactory system for primary care in relationships with patients over the course of time,” says Primaris CEO Richard A. Royer.

“This is not a fad,” he adds. “By putting the focus back on the patient-primary care provider relationship, we’re going back to the way things used to be in a simpler era, before there were so many specialties and providers. We’re returning to that philosophy, but now we’re doing it with modern technology and abilities.”