

BETTER DIABETES CARE FOR THE UNDERSERVED IN WEST VIRGINIA

System changes and electronic medical records improve efficiency and quality

Public Health Problem

- West Virginia has the fourth highest rate of diabetes in the nation, a condition that increases the risk of death and disability from serious complications such as heart attack and stroke.
- Low-income populations and those with limited access to care experience even greater risk for development of diabetes.
- Quality diabetes care can help reduce the risk of disease complications.
- Disease registries and electronic medical records can save time and help providers deliver better quality diabetes care.

Program

- For several years the West Virginia University Office of Health Services Research has worked with Roane County Family Health Care, a federally qualified health center, to monitor and improve the quality of care provided to people with diabetes.
- Federally qualified health centers provide care to patients who are generally underserved, of low socioeconomic status, and at high risk for development of chronic disease.
- A strong partnership with the West Virginia Diabetes Prevention and Control Program enables the University to provide Roane County Family Health Care health professionals and staff with education in chronic disease management. They also helped establish and continue to support the Chronic Disease Electronic Management System that tracks the delivery of care provided to patients.
- The Chronic Disease Electronic Management System now includes all patients with diabetes and is used by the health center for quality assurance related to disease management.

Impact

There has been significant improvement in health-related measures for the health center's patients with diabetes:

- The average improvement in measures of blood sugar control is an amount estimated to decrease amputations by over 8% and micro-vascular disease by almost the same amount. Micro-vascular disease causes vision loss and leads to blindness among people with diabetes.
- The system now documents that patients are getting their blood pressure measured.
- Average blood cholesterol among patients has improved by five percent.
- The health center implemented an electronic medical record and a reminder system that, along with the quality reports, helps them identify patients in need of care and get them to the center.

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