

MetaStar: Wisconsin's Quality Improvement Organization

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MetaStar, Wisconsin's health care quality improvement organization (QIO), is dedicated to ensuring the healthiest lives possible for citizens of Wisconsin. MetaStar itself, of course, does not deliver health care, so we accomplish our mission by partnering with the many other organizations, providers, and health care professionals who dedicate themselves to providing health care in our state. It is only through collaboration, sharing, and learning from one another that we can optimize the quality of health care to achieve the 6 aims enunciated by the Institute of Medicine: safety, timeliness, effectiveness, efficiency, equity, and patient-centeredness.

These 6 aims guide all of MetaStar's work. MetaStar hosts and participates in numerous activities that affect each of these 6 areas, sometimes several areas simultaneously.

Safety

MetaStar convenes and coordinates Safe Care Wisconsin: Partners for Advancing Health Care Safety, a

committee whose mission is to facilitate the development of partnerships to promote the safest health care in Wisconsin. The group includes approximately 30 organizations representing health care professionals, consumer organizations, provider associations, and payers. The group's focus currently is to promote consumer awareness of their medication safety issues and to provide patients and their families with education and tools to assist in reconciling medications.

MetaStar has taken a leadership role in the Institute for Healthcare Improvement's (IHI) 100,000 Lives Campaign,² acting as the convener of the "Wisconsin node," a group of 7 organizations that came together to promote the campaign to Wisconsin hospitals and to provide support and resources for participating hospitals.

Currently, MetaStar has several projects underway that promote various aspects of safe care. One is the Rural Organizational Safety Culture project, which focuses on culture change in rural hospitals. In this project, MetaStar assists rural hospitals in assessing their organizational safety culture and select, test, and implement changes to improve the safety culture. Another MetaStar project is the Surgical Care Infection Prevention (SCIP) project, which focuses on the appropriate use of antibiotics before, during, and after surgery to

prevent infections resulting from the surgical procedure. A project is currently being conducted with several Medicare Part D plans to decrease the use of inappropriate, high-risk drugs in elderly patients. In addition, MetaStar works with Wisconsin's Medicaid and Family Care programs on performance improvement projects and quality reviews, and has conducted medical director training and patient safety certifications.

Timeliness

Providing timely care is an area MetaStar has focused on in the SCIP project with the timing of antibiotics: starting and stopping them appropriately, the swift administration of antibiotics in patients hospitalized with community-acquired pneumonia, the timely administration of aspirin and beta blockers at admission for patients with acute myocardial infarction, and timely administration of influenza and pneumococcal immunizations.

Effectiveness

Under MetaStar's contract with the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services we work with nursing homes, home health agencies, hospitals, and physician offices to improve and make more effective the care on many clinical indicators. As part of the 100,000 Lives Campaign MetaStar and its partners have worked with hospitals to support

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the implementation of 6 proven, life-saving techniques that were implemented and made standard.

MetaStar also is coordinating for Wisconsin, in partnership with other organizations, Advancing Excellence in Nursing Homes, a collaborative similar to the 100,000 Lives Campaign. This campaign has the following goals: reducing high risk pressure ulcers; reducing the use of daily physical restraints; improving pain management for longer term nursing home residents; improving pain management for short stay, post-acute nursing home residents; establishing individual targets for improving quality; assessing resident and family satisfaction with the quality of care; increasing staff retention; and improving consistent assignment of nursing home staff, so that residents regularly receive care from the same caregivers.

MetaStar expects to play a similar role soon in a similar initiative designed to reduce the rate of acute care hospitalization for home health patients.

MetaStar conducts HEDIS audits for health plans nationwide. HEDIS is a set of standardized performance measures designed to provide consumers and employers with objective, comparative data regarding the quality of care provided by health plans.

Efficiency

In an effort to make health care more efficient, MetaStar has launched several significant initiatives with hospitals and physician offices to assist them in the implementation of electronic information technology. The Doctor's Office Quality – Information Technology (DOQ-IT) project provides physician offices with assistance in assessing and implementing electronic health records, which will result in more accurate records for

patients that can be easily accessed by health care professionals and providers. Through the Systems Improvement and Organizational Culture Change project, MetaStar is working with hospitals to implement barcoding, computerized physician order entry, and telehealth or telemedicine.

Equity

For a number of years MetaStar has worked with other organizations and agencies in Wisconsin to reduce health care disparities for underserved populations. These efforts have focused on such areas as lipid testing and other diabetes care in the African-American population where rates are significantly lower than for the white population. MetaStar also partnered on a grant from the Centers for Disease Control to promote immunization in the African-American population.

A major initiative MetaStar is working on with physicians is the Health Care and Culture Project,³ a free continuing education activity for primary care practitioners (physicians, physician assistants, nurse practitioners, and clinic managers) providing education on how to work best with patients whose beliefs, values, histories, and languages are significantly different from those of the physician. The program is based on the 14 Culturally and Linguistically Appropriate Services (CLAS) standards created by the US Office of Minority Health.

Patient-centeredness

As part of its work with the Medicare program, MetaStar reviews and responds to complaints about the quality of care from patients and their families. MetaStar has also conducted a survey of clients enrolled in the Family Care program to assess and assist in improving the care they receive.

Conclusion

The initiatives highlighted above are not carried out by MetaStar alone, but all are pursued in partnership with physicians, hospitals, nursing homes, home health agencies, and other individuals and organizations that support health care in Wisconsin. At present, MetaStar has 7 advisory groups with dozens of representatives from the health care community that provide guidance, input, and partnerships to create positive change in the care provided to Wisconsin patients. So in collaboration with many organizations and individuals MetaStar aims for higher quality and healthier lives.

References

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