

High-Performing Clinics Document Advance Directive Information

An ongoing Medica goal is to encourage members to have a written Advance Directive/Health Care Directive so that their wishes about medical treatment will be carried out if they are unable to communicate their decisions themselves. In accordance with the national Patient Self-Determination Act, health care providers are required to educate patients on issues related to Advance Directives. To that end, Medica encourages providers to offer information and answer questions about Advance Directives with their patients.

During 2007, Medica's Clinical & Service Quality Review Program examined the performance of 33 clinic groups for their compliance with documentation about Advance Directives for Medica Medicare members.

Four groups stand out prominently and were willing to share the methods they use to obtain their high performance level. Following are their scores and methods used to achieve a high performance level. The aggregate percent as well as the percentages cited below refer to positive answers to the measurement question: "Is there evidence in the medical record that the patient does or does not have an advance directive?" For comparison the aggregate score of all examined groups was 48 percent.

North Memorial Clinics achieved 97%. The clinic uses the electronic medical record (EMR) tool to remind staff when the patient's advance directive is not complete. The rooming staff has been specifically trained to review the EMR tool of each patient. The clinic also stated it used the JCAHO Survey to encourage improvement and showed results to clinic staff.

Camden Physicians achieved 97%. They have a preventive service process for patients coming in for their yearly physical. The tool they use is a form that prompts staff to address advanced directives and other preventive services with patients. Nursing staff prep the charts before the patients come in to determine what services are needed.

Camden has several quality committees that meet to develop processes for a variety of topics and review results from the health plan audits which are reported then at various committees: quality council, provider meetings, administrative meetings, etc.

Quello Clinics achieved 97%. Included in the clinics' problem list is a question to identify whether a patient has an advance directive on file. Once an advance directive is received, it is entered in the chart. Everyone caring for the patient is responsible for getting advance directive information. If the information is not in the record, medical records staff follow up with the provider to ensure that the advance directive question is answered.

Columbia Park Medical Group achieved 90%. The clinic states they use a "team" approach. Starting with the front desk receptionist and including each staff member that sees the patient they assess if Advance Directives have been documented. This includes the rooming nurse and physician. Each record has a red sticker on the front of the medical record documenting if the patient does or does not have Advance Directives.

Providers interested in learning more about the successful methods of these groups may contact Ramona Fennell, RN, Medica Clinical Reviewer, at 952-992-3878 or by e-mail at ramona.fennell@medica.com. Future editions of *Medica Connections* will highlight other top performers in key areas of clinical review.

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