Interprofessional Trainee Led QI Project to Increase Warm Handoffs in Primary Care

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Research has found improved health outcomes for patients who are engaged through the Primary Care Mental Health Integration model (PCMHI). This model of care emphasizes interprofessional work, with the patient having access to nurses, pharmacists, primary care providers and mental health care providers. Warm handoffs (WHO) are an integral part of this model. Our project aimed to increase the frequency of WHO’s to psychology and pharmacy providers. Doing so would help increase access to what would traditionally be separate, specialty care. The population of patients were military veterans, largely from rural areas. Each WHO that occurred was captured and documented. The QI team members correlated their interventions to the data and surmised the efficacy of the different interventions. Descriptive statistics revealed that the project was successful in achieving the project aim of increasing WHO by 300%.

This QI project was a mix of pharmacists, psychologists, and primary care providers. We strived to better understand each professions role and unique contribution to patient care. The success of this project necessitated each team member working with colleagues from different professions to complete our project aims. This current presentation details what we found to be effective practices to facilitate interprofessional work. Our presenter and mentor of this project is a clinical psychologist and was the Associate Director for Evaluation and Performance Improvement.

In our clinic, we work diligently to partner and actively engage our veteran’s in their healthcare. We employ the recovery model, with the perspective that the veteran is the expert on themselves and are at the center of care. The PCMH model integrates many different aspects of care, with each profession offering a different specialty. Psychologists on the team work to engage the veteran in unique ways to help facilitate behavioral health changes, often times eliciting the veteran’s family in their care. It is this sense of partnership and trust that can help lead to improved patient healthcare outcomes.