

Compliance and population healthcare in a primary care physician's practice

PCPs are under tremendous pressure to see more patients, manage chronic care conditions, adapt to higher standards on electronic medical records, meet quality standards and of course create an environment where their patient has a positive outcome. This daunting task of meeting all these standards placed on them by Health and Human Services (HHS), health plans and PCP employers due to regulations under which each entity is being measured. Finally, there is the push to accurately chart and code that is being managed by the Recovery Audit Contractor Program. These factors are all ways to measure and track outcomes with a patient. One could argue that while these are all well-intentioned measurements, they do nothing that population healthcare could accomplish.

To level set, Population Healthcare is the holistic management of individual's chronic healthcare conditions. In addition, Population Healthcare is not an event, rather an ongoing activity performed predominantly by primary care physicians (PCPs). Aside from an unknown way for regulators to measure outcomes, population healthcare accomplishes everything HHS wants for the public.

The challenge is that adoption of population healthcare principles by PCPs in particular seems problematic when we pay them on an episodic basis. This may not be as daunting a task as it may seem. PCPs are trained in population healthcare in residency. Second, PCPs are passionate about keeping their patients healthy. Finally, with the advent of timely actionable information it is possible for PCPs to manage their patient's chronic conditions. The next step is how to reintroduce the concepts into their current practices.

PCPs are under incredible pressure to meet numerous metrics. We need to recognize these challenges and develop the tools necessary to help the PCP meet the compliance requirements while allowing them to provide the quality of care through population healthcare. By embracing population healthcare at an organizational level, we can support the PCPs in their efforts to help our organizations achieve the quality metrics set by HHS.

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