Cuyahoga County REACH
Community Clinical Linkage

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Session 36: Establishing Relationships with Community Resources for Community Clinical Linkages
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Community Clinical Linkages (CCL)

- **Definition:** Connections between community and clinical sectors to improve population health (1)
- **Our goal:** Develop a sustainable, scalable method for connecting patients seen in primary care practices to community resources to address social needs
- **Our process:** Build an electronic, bi-directional referral and feedback system between safety-net primary care clinic in REACH14 priority neighborhood and 2-1-1

REACH CCL Overview

- Priority population:
  - REACH14 program: African Americans in select eastside of Cleveland neighborhoods with higher rates of poverty and less than HS education
  - CCL pilot: Adult patients with hypertension and elevated blood pressure

- Key partners:
  - Cuyahoga County Board of Health (CCBH) – Backbone agency of HIP-Cuyahoga Consortium and lead REACH awardee
  - Better Health Partnership (BHP) – Regional healthcare improvement collaborative and CCL strategy lead
  - United Way of Greater Cleveland (UW) – Non-profit that operates 2-1-1 Helpline for Northeast Ohio
  - J Glen Smith Health Center – MetroHealth System (Metro) community clinic serving priority neighborhood
CCL Referral Process

Clinic to Community Linkage for REACH Grant

Self-management/HEAL referral for hypertension
HEAL = healthy eating active living

Patient visits Provider/RN/MA → Patient has diagnosis of hypertension & BP >= 140/90

Provider/RN/MA refers to UW211 for self-management/HEAL → UW211 Navigator assesses social needs & refers to self-management/HEAL

Dedicated phone # → UW211 calls or texts patient

Feedback → EHR aggregate

BHP

Community Resource

Desired Outcomes
Increased access to/ use of community resources
Fewer unmet social needs
Healthier behaviors
Decreased blood pressure

Community Resource

Community Resource
Relationships/Support

- BHP interested in CCL and hub-and-spoke model
- UW interested in social determinants of health referrals
- HIP-Cuyahoga partnerships and priorities
- REACH and local foundations grant opportunities/support
Technical Set Up

- Establish interoperability between Metro Epic EHR and UW211 ReferNET system
  - Secure connection of the information systems
  - Develop referral processes and workflows
  - Build out referral order in Epic
  - Inbox for record creation in ReferNET
- Need buy-in and support from IT at both entities, including specialists and leadership
- Connectivity took ~6 months, including testing
  - Clinic-to-community direction complete
  - Community-to-clinic direction in progress
Legal Parts

- Business Associate Agreement (BAA)
  - To establish non-covered entity UW as a business associate of covered entity Metro to help carry out health care functions
  - Required by HIPAA privacy and security regulations
  - Allows minimum necessary PHI to be transmitted
  - Specifies safeguards and assurances to prevent unauthorized use or disclosure, and accountability and liability if breach occurs

- Definitive Agreement
  - Defines roles, responsibilities, and expectations between BHP and UW for the specific project

- Risk Assessment
  - Ensures data system to be linked has proper security standards
Legal Experience

- Explain project to Metro Legal
- Consultation from health information exchange experts nationally
- Get buy-in from Metro Compliance
- Business Associate Agreement (BAA) ~7 months
  - Metro had template
- Definitive Agreement ~3 months
- Risk Assessment ~5 months
  - Some health systems may not require
- Define data elements to be exchanged during process
- **Sequence of above may vary and timing can overlap**
EHR Referral Order

If the patient consents to a Referral to UNITED WAY, please place the Referral Order order UW211ADULT. If not, click on DISMISS.

Your blood pressure today was 155/100. One way to help improve blood pressure is to connect you to community resources for healthy eating, active living and self-management. I would like to make a referral to UW211 for you today. United Way 2-1-1 is a free service that helps get our patients connected with resources that can help with your blood pressure. May I make the referral for you?

Order  Do Not Order

Add  Do Not Add

Adult United Way 2-1-1 Referral
Click ADD if patient consents to a referral to United Way Adult Services.

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Patient Brochure

A new program at J. Glen Smith

Teaming up for health

Good health is more than just good health care

At MetroHealth, we want to do all we can to help you and your family be healthy.

We have partnered with United Way of Greater Cleveland to offer a special program for select J. Glen Smith patients that can help you find resources in the community to improve your health.

How does it work?

1. Referral to United Way
   A MetroHealth staff member may offer you a referral if your blood pressure is elevated.

2. Talk to United Way Navigation Specialist
   A trained dedicated expert will call you. They will help you find resources to manage your blood pressure and other services to help you and your family. You can also reach them by calling 1-833-225-2211.

3. Navigation Specialist follow-up phone call
   The 2-1-1 navigator will follow up to see how you are doing.

United Way will find free or low-cost:
- Places for healthy food
- Places to exercise
- Workshops to improve blood pressure and improve your health
- Social services such as utility assistance, mental health and addiction treatment, and legal help
Next Steps

- Spread and scale
  - Establish the CCL referral system at 2-3 additional clinics (pediatric)
  - Build referral orders for other conditions (childhood obesity/asthma)
- Finalize direct electronic feedback loop from UW211 ReferNET to health systems EHRs
- Continue evaluation, quality improvement, and dissemination

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HIP-Cuyahoga’s mission is to inspire, influence, and advance policy, environmental, and lifestyle changes that foster health and wellness for everyone who lives, works, learns, and plays in Cuyahoga County.

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