

BRIGHT LIGHTS AWARDS



2016

Measuring Performance to Foster Improvement in Comprehensive Care Mount Sinai Academic Family Health Team

Healthy Living with Pain



Recognizing the importance of measurement, primary care teams are building their capacity to track the most meaningful indicators, capture accurate data in a manageable way, and using their findings to improve quality.

The Mount Sinai Academic Family Health Team used measurement to identify opioid abuse among its urban clientele, an increasing problem among Ontarians suffering from chronic pain. It has become such a concern in the province that the Ontario government gave notice in July of its plans to de-list

a number of high-strength opioids from its drug formulary in January 2017 as a way of fighting what it calls the “growing problem of opioid addiction in Ontario.”

In response, this primary care team created an innovative interprofessional program called Healthy Living with Pain. Their interprofessional team-based approach was led by a nurse practitioner and included physicians, medical residents and pharmacy. The team used best practices to deal with patients on chronic opioids and ensure that narcotics are safely and appropriately prescribed. Their results display real evidence of harm reduction and a decrease in aberrant behaviours among patients, based on a combination of support and education.

The program put a more regular process into place that resulted in numerous measurable improvements in treatment and patient response. Initially, only 31 percent of patients had signed opioid treatment agreements and 13 per cent had provided urine samples for drug testing. After program implementation, these numbers increased to 71 per cent and 50 per cent, respectively. Opioid dosage dropped from 106 milligrams daily to 80 milligrams. The program offered patients a greater continuity of care, and as it progressed, the providers also became more comfortable in providing care.

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Providers also began to see a reduction in various aberrant behaviours. Requests for early drug refills dropped by 41.7 per cent, while requests for higher doses of medication fell by 25 per cent. There was also a 66.7 per cent reduction in abnormal drug readings in urine testing.

Medical residents, pharmacy students and nurse practitioner students play a part in delivering the program, and they receive regular education about chronic pain management and prescribing opioids. Education and research add to team expertise, and local specialists serve as program consultants. Through regular reviews, the program is adjusted to meet the needs of patients, who work with the nurse practitioner to offer feedback. As one of the first chronic pain programs offered by a primary care team, Healthy Living with Pain is an example of what can be accomplished through teamwork, innovative thinking and evidence-based practice.

Key Facts:

- Increased opioid abuse by chronic pain sufferers led to development of Healthy Living with Pain Program
- Interprofessional program uses best practices
- Key indicators of success include:
 - 41.7 drop in requests for early drug refills
 - 66.7 per cent reduction in abnormal urine test readings
 - Daily opioid dose reduction to 80 mg from 106 mg