

Grant Outcome Report

Implementing a Diabetes Registry in the Adirondack Region

The Problem:

The prevalence of diabetes in adults in New York State's Adirondack region is disproportionately higher than the State's rate. The percentage of adults who reported receiving an HbA1c test in the region is also significantly lower than the statewide average. At the same time, patients in this region are more likely to have lower incomes than the statewide average and lack the transportation resources necessary to obtain care.

Glens Falls Hospital is a community hospital with multiple primary care practice sites in the Adirondack region. With support from the New York State Health Foundation (NYSHealth), Glens Falls Hospital undertook what it referred to as the registry project. Its aim was to implement a Web-based diabetes registry at six of its twelve primary care sites to increase the efficiency and effectiveness of care provided to its patients with diabetes. The program was also designed to include a menu of resources and support programs to help patients self-manage their condition using a community health worker program, and in partnership with community-based organizations.

This project was funded under NYSHealth's 2007 *Setting the Standard: Advancing Best Practices in Diabetes Management* request for proposals (RFP). The goal of *Setting the Standard* was to move New York State's primary care system to adopt and spread best practices in disease management and establish them as the universal standard of care for patients with diabetes. At the time, multiple diabetes management programs already existed throughout New York State, along with established collaboratives to maximize the impact of these programs. Thus, NYSHealth expected the grants made under the RFP to advance these programs and build systemwide capacity to support, sustain, and institutionalize these efforts. The Chronic Care Model (CCM)—a highly respected and accepted framework for approaching the improvements sought through this initiative—was a major reference point in the RFP.

KEY INFORMATION:

GRANTEE

Glens Falls Hospital, Inc.

GRANT TITLE

Sustainable Strategies for
Diabetes Self-Management

DATES

January 1, 2008 – June 8, 2011

GRANT AMOUNT

\$149,127

FUNDING

2007 Setting the Standard:
Advancing Best Practices in Diabetes
Management Request for Proposals

Grant Activities and Outcomes:

Glens Falls Hospital planned to implement an initiative that would improve quality of life and clinical outcomes for patients with diabetes by:

- Implementing care management processes derived from the CCM and deploying diabetes self-management resources within Glens Falls Hospital primary care settings; and
- Improving the network of social support interventions in community settings.

To advance these goals, Glens Falls Hospital used NYSHealth funds to establish disease registries in its family health centers, redesign diabetes care delivery, and implement some community-based initiatives.

The project got off to a slow start. Although the medical director and several other hospital employees were indicated as project team members, this project lacked physician and staff member participation until year two of the project, when the project manager developed a more active, interdisciplinary, multi-practice quality improvement team. While hospital leadership had verbalized a commitment to quality improvement, it took some time to put the structure and processes in place to begin implementing program changes.

Glens Falls Hospital selected DocSite, a Web-based registry, to establish disease registries throughout its family health centers. This decision was largely influenced by its collaboration with the New York Diabetes Coalition (NYDC), which was facilitating DocSite adoption at health practices across the State. However, after prolonged discussion, Glens Falls Hospital determined that the NYDC tools and measures did not meet its own specific needs, and decided to customize DocSite to meet these requirements.

Early data quality assurance checks revealed gaps in data entry and registry use, and remedial efforts were undertaken to address data reliability. These concerns were compounded by that fact that registry-generated reports did not match health plan claims-based reports. Given the number of challenges associated with using DocSite and Glens Falls Hospital's imminent plans for electronic medical records (EMR) adoption, the leadership team decided not to expand DocSite to their entire group. However, they noted that their registry implementation experience has prepared them well for configuring and customizing their EMRs for diabetes management and quality improvement.

Glens Falls Hospital also worked to incorporate certified diabetes educators (CDEs) and nutritionists into primary care practices. While the practices made progress with referrals and expanded the on-site presence of CDEs, their efforts were stymied by lack of provider buy-in and hospital practice

management system issues, which made it difficult to integrate resources across different clinical departments and settings.

The project included a community outreach component designed to bring services closer to people through self-management workshops and diabetes education classes offered at family health centers and other easily accessible community locations. Some of the programs promoted at these locations included a walking program with several outlined routes and indoor access for physical activity during the winter months through partnerships with the local school system.

The work completed under this grant has been received positively overall, and led the hospital to adopt diabetes as one of its three clinical improvement areas in 2010. The leadership team and clinical providers are reportedly more engaged in quality improvement in general, and the administration feels better prepared to undertake the primary care medical home certification process. Glens Falls Hospital submitted nine applications for National Committee for Quality Assurance (NCQA) diabetes recognition, of which six achieved recognition. It found the NCQA recognition process to be a valuable one, providing it with a systemic and standardized way of looking at care across its sites and a mechanism for measuring improvement in clinical outcomes.

Four sites entered patient data into a registry, but the grantee questioned the reliability of the data. Working with an outside evaluator, Glens Falls Hospital re-analyzed its data for three sites, including three months post-completion data, and found evidence of some improvement in one or more outcome measures for the two sites that had a minimum of 12 months of data.

As part of the *Setting the Standard* initiative, NYSHealth supported an outside evaluation of 10 of the 12 participating grantees. In addition to observing whether each grantee advanced against its proposed objectives, the evaluators also assessed how well each grantee adhered to the CCM principles. From the evaluators' perspective, Glens Falls Hospital is an example of an organization in the early stages of its CCM adoption and



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quality improvement path. The leadership and implementation team had a learning curve when it came to understanding how to use information from their newly implemented registry to improve patient outcomes. Also, their approach was not robust enough to achieve some of the outcome-oriented changes they desired. The evaluators suggested that NYSHealth should increase technical support to grantees in order to fast track the implementation of these ambitious goals in the future.

The Future:

Although the grantee did not meet all of the proposed objectives of the initiative, the organization's leadership and providers benefited from the lessons learned during the project. The initiative and its challenges positioned Glens Falls Hospital to make a transformative system change; after the close of the grant, Glens Falls Hospital achieved level-three patient-centered medical home (PCMH) recognition from NCQA. Glens Falls Hospital's efforts to achieve NCQA diabetes recognition also helped it set up the necessary infrastructure to meet the criteria for PCMH recognition, as well as to better understand the use and benefits of its EMRs.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

ABOUT THE GRANTEE

Glens Falls Hospital provides safety-net services to a five-county rural and economically challenged region covering more than 3,000 square miles in upstate New York. It administers a network of 13 primary care physician practices and family health centers, in addition to several specialty practices. Glens Falls Hospital operates community health initiatives through these sites to deliver cancer screenings; nutrition and diabetes counseling; tobacco cessation; and health education programs. Glens Falls Hospital is the leading agency of numerous New York State Department of Health-funded initiatives. Glens Falls Hospital has also been designated as a regional tobacco cessation center, and has played an active role in the seven-county diabetes network, a coalition of approximately 20 partners that provides diabetes prevention education events in community settings.

GRANTEE CONTACT

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