

SAMA HealthCare Services

EL DORADO, ARKANSAS, U.S.A.

SUCCESS
STORY

Healthy EHR core enables comprehensive primary care

SAMA HealthCare Services (El Dorado, Arkansas) uses Allscripts Professional EHR™, Allscripts Practice Management™ and FollowMyHealth® to provide patient-centered primary care. As part of a national initiative, known as the Comprehensive Primary Care Initiative, SAMA HealthCare redesigned its staffing model to better coordinate care. An Open platform from Allscripts enables SAMA HealthCare to customize its healthy EHR core with certified third-party applications, such as the Medicare annual wellness tool eDoc4U. SAMA HealthCare's efforts have helped patients avoid unnecessary emergency room visits and receive better preventive care.

Experience

SAMA HealthCare Services is the largest primary care physician group serving patients in three metropolitan areas across four states. It is a comprehensive family practice and offers laboratory testing, radiology, pharmacy and preventive care under one roof.

Arkansas has some of the toughest healthcare challenges in the country. According to the United Health Foundation, Arkansas is the second unhealthiest state in the nation, with high rates of smoking, obesity, diabetes and poverty. Lack of preventive care, immunizations and access to quality care also plays a role.

To address these challenges, Arkansas is one of seven states participating in a Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) four-year pilot project, the Comprehensive Primary Care Initiative (CPCI). It is a collaboration among public and private payers to strengthen primary care.

By investing more in primary care practices, the partners hope to achieve better health, better care and lower healthcare costs. CMS selected SAMA HealthCare as one of nearly 500 practices nationwide to participate.

Solutions

SAMA HealthCare recognized that they needed to make some changes to its practice to meet the patient-centered model in CPCI. It relied on its healthy EHR core and long-term partnership with Allscripts to meet program requirements. "We've used Professional EHR and Practice Management for 12 years now," SAMA Administrator Pete Atkinson said. "It's customizable, and that's really nice in our environment."

Atkinson continued, "When we started CPCI two years ago, the first thing we did was meet with Allscripts...I was impressed how they worked with us and made changes, like introducing risk stratification, as quickly as they did."

Overview

CLIENT PROFILE:

- 9,200 patient visits each year
- 5 physicians and 7 nurse practitioners
- Family practice offers lab testing, radiology, pharmacy and preventive care under one roof

SOLUTIONS:

- Allscripts Professional EHR™
- Allscripts Practice Management™
- FollowMyHealth®
- FollowMyHealth® Achieve (beta site)
- eDoc4U Medicare wellness application via Allscripts Developer Program

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OUTCOMES:

- Helped patients avoid 880 unnecessary ER visits, saving an estimated \$2.6 million
- Increased number of diabetic patients who had foot exams to 40%, compared with the national average of 10%
- Earned \$2 million for Comprehensive Primary Care Initiative and Meaningful Use

"We've pushed the envelope and look for ways to keep the patient foremost in the encounter...With Professional EHR and eDoc4U, it was a way to further extend that goal and offer a much greater value to our patients."

Dr. Gary Bevell
Lead Physician
SAMA HealthCare Services

SAMA HealthCare used CPCI funding to remodel parts of its clinic, upgrade equipment and move to a new staffing model that helps better coordinate patient care. In return, SAMA provides detailed reports back to CMS to evaluate the program's success.

"The reporting capabilities of Professional EHR have been really helpful for us in the Comprehensive Primary Care Initiative," SAMA HealthCare Health Informatics Coordinator Nancy New said. "We felt like we were really ahead of a lot of other clinics in being able to report in the first year of the program."

SAMA HEALTHCARE'S COLORFUL APPROACH TO CARE COORDINATION

One of the most significant changes SAMA HealthCare undertook as part of CPCI was to reconfigure its staffing model. Previously each doctor, nurse practitioner and physician's assistant would work with a nurse or two to deliver care. It was challenging to provide continuity to patients, especially walk-in patients with acute care needs.

Now SAMA HealthCare embraces a team concept. Each doctor leads a team that consists of a nurse practitioner, three nurses and a care coordinator. Each team wears a single color to help patients easily identify their caregivers. These care teams work together to help keep patients well with comprehensive outpatient care, including preventative services.

"The key thing in a patient-centered medical home model is to identify the patients who need additional help from us," Atkinson said. "Through care coordination we do risk stratification so we're able to identify the patients who have certain conditions that we can address."

ENGAGING PATIENTS WITH FOLLOWMYHEALTH

SAMA HealthCare recognizes the importance of engaging its patients in their own healthcare to achieve patient-centered care. "Moving forward on the patient-centered medical home model, a lot of that is getting those patients involved," Atkinson said.

When it launched the FollowMyHealth patient engagement platform in 2014, SAMA HealthCare initially encouraged all staff members to sign on as patients and use the system to help manage their own health. Once staff members were comfortable with the portal, they educated patients about the system through conversations, emails, posters and various other communications.

SAMA HealthCare uses FollowMyHealth to enhance communications between providers and patients, and encourage patients to become more actively involved their health. "FollowMyHealth is very user friendly for the patients, and how quickly the messages are sent to the providers has been really good," New said.

To further increase patient engagement, SAMA HealthCare will soon launch FollowMyHealth Achieve. This solution enables clinicians to enter orders into the EHR for conditions including congestive heart failure, diabetes, hypertension and obesity. Patients access and follow the orders through the FollowMyHealth portal—which can include use of wireless devices such as scales, blood pressure monitors or blood glucose meters.

The care team receives alerts if the patient does not comply with the care plan or results fall outside of certain parameters. Having rich patient data will better enable SAMA HealthCare patients and caregivers to work together to set goals, mark progress, influence behaviors affecting health and achieve better outcomes.

EXTENDING THE VALUE OF THE EHR WITH EDOC4U

With its Open platform, Professional EHR enables SAMA HealthCare to integrate with certified third-party applications. One of those applications is eDoc4U, which automates required annual Medicare wellness exams and helps assess health risks. SAMA HealthCare discovered eDoc4U, a 2013 Allscripts Open App Challenge award winner, through the Allscripts Application Store.

“We’ve pushed the envelope and look for ways to keep the patient foremost in the encounter,” SAMA lead physician Dr. Gary Bevill said. “With Professional EHR and eDoc4U, it was a way to further extend that goal and offer a much greater value to our patients.”

For example, eDoc4U makes it simpler to complete Medicare wellness visits. According to Bevill, it’s a thorough risk assessment for patient health, safety and mental well-being. “It’s very lengthy survey, especially if you do it on paper,” Bevill said. “What eDoc4U has done is make it easy for patients to complete it electronically.”

SAMA HealthCare invites patients to take the assessment through FollowMyHealth. Higher completion rates of this risk assessment has several advantages for the patient and SAMA clinicians. eDoc4U quickly and clearly communicates patient risk assessments to clinicians, and it identifies if patients need preventive services, such as immunizations or mammograms.

Outcomes

Several measures are improving care at SAMA HealthCare within the first two years of participating in CPCI. For example, a renewed focus on preventative care has increased diabetic foot exams 400% in the first quarter alone. About 40% of SAMA HealthCare’s diabetic patients have had these exams, compared with just 10% nationally. These exams have the potential to reduce risk of amputation.

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Nancy New
Health Informatics Coordinator
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Better preventative care also helps patients avoid unnecessary trips to the emergency room. The clinic's expanded on-site services prevented 880 emergency room visits in 2013, which saved this organization an estimated \$2.6 million.

SAMA HealthCare's healthy EHR core continues to excel as the organization grows. "We've actually doubled the size of our clinic in the last 18 months, so we've really pushed the products," Atkinson said. "Allscripts has been great about working with us to modify the product to assist us in reaching our goals of patient-centered medical care."

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Administrator
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