



TCPi practices continue their quality journey through the development of Value Propositions. MGMA support and advocacy with payers is an additional benefit for TCPI participants. Onsite visits and area workshops are being offered, along with dedicated one-on-one assistance as practices create their unique profiles for purposes of contract negotiations.

Eight of fifteen practices have completed all five phases of TCPI, with the remainder of participants on track to finish by September 2019. All practices will actively continue in the program with Practice Facilitator and CHITA support, while specific efforts for individual practices based on needs and vision will be ongoing.

The Southwest Retina Consultants Story

Investing in patient-family engagement improves morale and productivity for TCPI practice.

One of the goals for Southwest Retina Consultants in Durango, during its participation in the Transforming Clinical Practice Initiative, is to enhance patient-family engagement efforts and to engage more fully in community events. Representatives from TCPI, a governor's office initiative that is funded by the Center for Medicare & Medicaid Innovation, encouraged the team to strengthen its patient and family engagement and to collect and share success stories.

"We repurposed marketing efforts/monies into supporting patients and the community," says Jennifer Batchelor, COA, practice administrator. "Our marketing efforts were expensive and did not reflect practice values. We redirected that money into tangible activities that reflect our practice culture, values and the wishes of the care team.

Activities include sponsoring and participating fundraisers around our patient's needs, supporting and participating in local senior activities such as the Lions Club, Rotary Clubs, and local senior health care events, and sponsoring school events and local arts programs that encourage people to get involved. Doctors also speak at several local events for Indian Health Services, local Rotary clubs and continuing education opportunities for physicians.

"We believe that a financial investment in our team, care processes and community will be more effective in growing our business while preparing for success in a world in which demonstrated care quality, efficient use of resources and excellent patient experience has a direct effect on compensation," Batchelor adds. "This new direction has improved morale and had a positive effect on relationships among team members and with patients, their families and the community. It's a win-win. We wanted more involvement with patients to sustain and build our reputation of excellent care, exceptional experience of care and better engagement with patients and families. We believe a tangible emphasis on patient-centered care exemplifies our values and will ultimately result in financial success."

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Seeing results

The team is committed to excellent care that, by definition, engages patients as partners in their care, and to organizing the practice in ways that are valuable to patients. “We want patients to experience exceptional care, recognize it as a practice hallmark and talk with friends and neighbors about it,” Batchelor explains. “Our tagline, ‘Helping you SEE better to LIVE better’ is demonstrated daily by our doctors’ focus on helping people to see better, which naturally improve patients’ lives and we continue to seek new ways to illustrate that commitment.”

The goal, she adds, was to turn patients into fans, who would rave about their experiences and expand the group’s marketing reach through word-of-mouth advertising. “To accomplish this, we focused on engaged listening, and hired a scribe so doctors could be active listeners. Scribes have allowed doctors to focus on patient examinations and prompt discussions about patients’ lives, their hobbies and interests. We believe this approach is more patient-centered and encourages patients to understand their conditions and develop treatment plans that include medication management,”

And that has paid off. “Patients say they feel highly valued, appreciated and more thoroughly cared for because of our efforts, which we believe will have a positive effect on our business” Batchelor adds. “We expect this approach to result in better care, lower costs and word-of-mouth marketing as patients share their positive experiences.”

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Process improvement

Examples of the team’s efforts to become more patient-centered include training to become active listeners, an investment in free resources for patients and their families and ongoing solicitation of patient and family input about what’s important to them and ways to integrate their preferences into care processes.

“Feedback about extended wait times, ease of the referral process, exam availability and direction on community resources helps expand our ‘inside’ perspective so that we can make them feel completely cared for,” explains Haley Jones, lead scribe/medical assistant.

The team is employing active listening skills to improve communication with patients and families, who might be looking for different types of resources. “We will identify and provide resources that patients and family members seek and will encourage staff and doctors to be involved in community events,” Jones adds.

The team’s interest in patients goes beyond providing quality eye/retina care.

“The work we’ve done has improved morale as well as the attitude and satisfaction among providers and staff,” Batchelor explains. “This approach, which connects our team to meaningful work that transcends clinic walls, encourages the team to demonstrate a commitment to patients and the community. We are demonstrating our willingness to contribute to the lives of those around us. We have also invested in cultural awareness and ensure that we have educational materials in multiple languages for patients, who are not proficient in English, employ bilingual staff and offer interpretation services as needed.

The largest adjustment, she says, was a change in mental focus on patient experience and satisfaction and community involvement. The investment of time and money has improved patient confidence in our doctors because patients recognize an interest that goes beyond eye care and start to realize that we care about them as people, not just as patients. The efforts have improved staff morale and led to improved productivity, she adds.

“TCPi helped us focus our vision on patients and their families and encouraged us to seek new opportunities to care for them,” Batchelor explains. “The initiative has given us tools to overcome barriers to true patient and family involvement, and to expand opportunities to support patients in various ways, such as supporting seniors, who are struggling to do things on their own, or identifying groups and activities for patients, who suffer from low-vision or other debilitating diseases. We will continue to implement our plan with the help of the TCPi team and plan to share our successes with other health care providers to illustrate the benefits of delivering value-based care. Repurposing marketing dollars to hire a scribe for doctors and train providers and staff in active listening techniques has enabled us to partner with patients in managing their care, which includes medication management and shared decision making,” she adds. “We actively solicit patient input to inform practice operations and practice priorities.”

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