

ACO In Action

Improving the Care of Patients with Lung Health Issues

Imagine struggling to catch your breath. Or not attending your grandchild's baseball game because it is too exhausting to get to the field. Think about how it would feel to have to miss a family barbeque because the heat and humidity will take your breath away. These are the challenges that people with lung conditions, like COPD, face every day. And in Maine, many people with COPD have the additional burden of being geographically isolated and poor.

In the fall of 2016, the MaineHealth ACO convened a large multi-stakeholder team to explore ways to improve the lives of people with COPD and other lung health issues. The team, made up of colleagues from the ACO, MaineHealth, Maine Medical Center and community organizations, met in October and developed a long list of possible focus areas that would both support people with lung health issues and support organizational priorities. A subgroup quickly convened to select and act upon the focus areas that held the most promise. Three rose to the top of the list:

1. **Education:** Increase care team awareness of available resources (i.e. MedAccess Program, CarePartners, Lung Health Program, Center for Tobacco Independence, etc.)
2. **Care Management Referral Workflow:** Develop a standardized workflow for referring patients to Care Management following inpatient care for a COPD exacerbation
3. **Plan of Care:** Develop a plan of care that is available to all care team members across the system

Now, a few months later, initiatives within these three priority areas are well underway.

1. Education

MaineHealth's Sarah Jones, Tamara Herrick and Bethany Sanborn have developed a list of about a dozen online and in-person lung health-related trainings that are available to care teams, and in some cases, to patients as well. A selection is listed here, to access the complete list, please contact Bethany at bsanborn@mainehealth.org or (207) 661-7576.

- **Learn about MedAccess:** MedAccess is a free MaineHealth program that helps patients access programs that reduce the cost of prescription medication. It helps patients and providers evaluate options such as pharmaceutical companies' patient assistance programs, low-cost generic programs and Medicare Part D and state and local prescription programs. In-person and webinar trainings are available to practice staff on how to work with MedAccess to support patients. Sarah Jones is the contact: jones1@mainehealth.org, (207) 662-7954
- **Learn about COPD:** On-demand, in-person trainings on COPD national treatment guidelines, common medications and current research are available from Martine Eon, MaineHealth's lung health clinical specialist. For more information, contact Martine at eonm@mmc.org or (207) 661-7155
- **Learn about tobacco dependence treatment:** MaineHealth's Center for Tobacco Independence has a team of tobacco treatment educators who are available to offer customized tobacco treatment

training for all members of the care team. Trainings are offered as requested and a menu of training options is available. For more information, contact Linda Craig at craig1@mainehealth.org or (207) 662-7150

2. Care Management Referral Workflow

The ACO's Kelly Williams, Susan Mitchell, Katie Senore and Beth Ray worked with subgroup members to create an effective workflow that identifies the steps for referring a patient with COPD to a care manager at the time of an inpatient discharge. The workflow outlines the intervention that will be taken by the care manager, which includes an initial home visit and coordination with activities such as transportation needs, medication affordability, teach-back of inhaler and nebulizer use, assessment of tobacco use and readiness to quit, and coordinating follow up visits with providers if needed. The workflow is now being piloted in conjunction with Maine Medical Center's COPD Workgroup.

3. Plan of Care

COPD patient documentation will soon be more accessible to care teams through the new Longitudinal Plan of Care (LPOC), a tool devised by MaineHealth and the MaineHealth ACO that will display key patient information on a single Epic screen. Info will include a patient headline, social history, responses to social determinants of health questions, problem list, patient care coordination notes, advance care planning notes, recent ED visits and hospitalizations, current medications, patient goals, care team members, and future appointments. Currently in a testing phase, the LPOC will roll out to the MaineHealth network in the coming months.

Future Plans

"We're very excited about the progress our multi-organizational team of collaborators has had bringing these lung health interventions to life," says Kelly Williams, the MaineHealth ACO's director of care coordination. "After we complete the pilot phase of these projects, I can't wait to see how ACO participants and MaineHealth members run with them. We should see some very positive outcomes for patients with COPD and other lung conditions."

After evaluating and learning from this collaborative intervention development process, the ACO hopes to adapt and replicate it to develop interventions to support patients with other chronic diseases.