

DMAA Comments on Health Care Reform and Chronic Disease Management

By Jeanette C. May, Ph.D., M.P.H.



Policymakers crafting health care reform initiatives do seem to understand that chronic disease is the primary driver of health care costs in the U.S. As such, several themes have emerged in the debate on how to respond and mitigate the increasing prevalence and cost of caring for chronically ill individuals.

The themes include increased and continued emphasis on wellness and prevention, improved coordination of care, effective transitions of care, the role of health teams, an increased role for accountability and expanded adoption of health information technology.

These themes were apparent in the 2009 stimulus legislation, the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 (Pub.L.111-5), as well as in various health system reform proposals now before House and Senate committees.

These themes align closely with the direction of population health management in recent years and expansion beyond single-state disease management to whole person, total population management that we have seen. This expansion has included a dramatic increase in health care team building, collaboration and support for the primary care physician as the health team leader.

“ Various reform models under consideration — such as accountable care organizations (ACOs), patient-centered medical homes and health care cooperatives — share strategies and components that have roots in population health management. The population health management industry supports these various care delivery models and the ultimate goals of improved care coordination, reduced health care costs and better patient outcomes. ”



Various reform models under consideration — such as accountable care organizations (ACOs), patient-centered medical homes and health care cooperatives — share strategies and components that have roots in population health management. The population health management industry supports these various care delivery models and the ultimate goals of improved care coordination, reduced health care costs and better patient outcomes.

These various health care delivery models share strategies and components, including —

- population identification strategies and processes
- comprehensive needs assessments — physical, psychological, economic and environmental
- proactive health promotion programs that increase awareness of the health risks associated with certain behaviors and lifestyles



- patient-centric health management goals and education, including prevention and behavior modification
- self-management interventions
- routine reporting and feedback among patients, caregivers, providers and health plans
- evaluation of clinical, humanistic and economic outcomes on an ongoing basis.

Health information technology (IT) plays a critical role in the success of these programs, and the population health management industry has a long history of using advanced health IT for effective coordination and service delivery. Their experience and expertise contribute significantly to the health reform discussion as health IT continues to be seen as an essential element for health care change.

Health care reform debates have also placed greater emphasis on understanding both clinical and financial program outcomes. These outcome evaluations will play an increasingly important role in coming years as more emphasis is placed on comparative effectiveness. Comprehensive consensus guidelines for program evaluation developed by the population health management industry offer important opportunities for understanding the value of population health management and will help to inform comparative effectiveness research.

May is vice president, research & quality, DMAA: The Care Continuum Alliance, Washington, D.C.

Strengthen Your Team with the CCA Member-Get-a-Member Program

The American College of Cardiology values Cardiac Care Associate (CCA) members as important players on the health care team, particularly in their highly interactive roles with the patients. The College also knows that ACC members are the best communicators when it comes to telling their cardiac care team colleagues about the value of ACC membership and the College's commitment to quality health care for patients. Now you have the opportunity to play an active role in connecting all qualified cardiac care team professionals with the College by participating in the new CCA Member-Get-a-Member Program.

When you refer a colleague for ACC Cardiac Care Associate membership, you are offering to share with them the clinical education, networking and leadership opportunities that you experience now. With the College's publications, Web site resources and programs, your new colleagues will receive the latest cardiovascular care guidelines and patient education resources. Most important, sharing the value of ACC membership strengthens the power of all of us who are committed to educating ourselves on the best care and advocating for better health care policies.

Beginning Sept. 1, 2009, the ACC will reward every member who recruits a new CCA member – that includes nurse practitioners, registered nurses, clinical nurse specialists, physician assistants and pharmacists. With each new CCA member referred, the referring member will earn \$20 in discounts to put toward ACC educational products and programs. Top recruiters will be recognized in *Cardiology* magazine and the Cardiovascular Care Team Newsletter.

Star recruiters referring more than five new CCA members by Dec. 31, 2009 will also be eligible for several prizes including:

- Grand Prize: **Apple iPod Touch 16G**
- Second Prize: **Free Domestic Roundtrip Ticket on United or American Airlines**
- Third Prize: **\$100 gift card**

Send referrals to Kelli Bohannon at kbohanno@acc.org or visit ACC.org/CCAreruitment for more information and to download a recruitment toolkit and membership application. Please write your name at the top of the form, or be certain to remind your colleagues to include your name when submitting their application to the College so that you receive credit.

