

Premier Patient Healthcare ACO: Leveraging Medicare Annual Wellness Visits for Healthier Patients and Shared Savings

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With healthcare costs in the United States reaching \$2.5 trillion a year, it is believed that 30 percent or more of these costs are related to over-utilization of unnecessary services or duplication of services. For the booming Medicare population there are two ways to decrease over-utilization. One is to keep patients healthy with evidence-based preventive services and the other is to prospectively identify high- risk over-utilizers and provide care coordination.

The Medicare Annual Wellness Visit (AWV) helps to achieve both these goals, and under the Affordable Care Act (ACA), Medicare coverage expanded in 2011 to fully cover annual preventive care visits.

The Annual Wellness Visit is not a yearly physical exam. The purpose of the visit is to inform evidence-based preventive services by an appropriate clinical provider in the appropriate clinical setting.

In this new era of value-based healthcare, Accountable Care Organizations (ACOs) are utilizing Medicare Annual Wellness Visits as a tool to better engage patients and reduce healthcare costs. In addition to improving patient health, AWVs can also improve patient satisfaction. In a recent study at Marshall University, patients were surveyed after AWV completion. A large majority of patients viewed the AWV positively and reported satisfaction with the visit and their healthcare providers. *

During its inaugural year in 2014, Premier Patient Healthcare ACO (Premier) was able to complete 500 Annual Wellness Visits. Understanding the opportunity and the need for active improvement, Premier's management team developed a multi-pronged approach to substantially increase AWV completion in subsequent years.

Technology

- **AWV Landing Page** - Premier created a customized, dedicated web page to serve as a central resource to encourage physicians to embrace AWV protocols. The site includes:
 - Targeted educational content supporting the need for, and the value of, engaging every patient through a Medicare Annual Wellness Visit.
 - Overview of Medicare Quality Performance Measures, importance of proper reporting and guidelines for capturing 80percent of Medicare's required Quality Reporting Measures by conducting an AWV.
 - A real-time clock counting down to key AWV deadlines to instill a sense of urgency.

- A constantly evolving library of tools, protocols and forms serving as a one-stop resource for physicians to obtain all materials they'll need for successful AWW outreach. This includes vastly simplified and consolidated intake protocols and AWW forms designed to help physicians quickly and easily move through each visit while capturing all necessary information.
- **Premier 360 Suite** - Our proprietary, real-time predictive and performance monitoring technology suite includes many tools to help physicians target and coordinate care.
 - AWW dashboard module provides real-time performance results, which physicians can measure against AWW completion goals.
 - Predictive modeling module that gathers and processes encounter data—including that gleaned from the Annual Wellness Visit—to help identify patients who have, or are at-risk for developing, preventable and chronic conditions.

The functionality within Premier 360 allows physicians to coordinate preventive services, care and disruptive intervention for those patients who need it most. This timely, targeted intervention helps patients develop better health under the guidance and care of their primary doctor, and pre-empts the worsening of health problems that most typically lead to misuse or overuse of self-directed diagnostic services and hospital admission and readmission.

Targeted in-Office Support and Communication Tools

- **Patient Focus Lists** - Regularly updated lists provided to physicians to help them zero in on patients who have never had, or are overdue for, an Annual Wellness Visit.
- **In-office Educational Installations** - Posters, patient frequently asked question sheets and office marketing materials were shared with office and patients to promote understanding and compliance around AWWs.
- **Practice Staff Education** - With the help of practice physicians, Premier Account Managers helped educate practice staff on the importance of, and methods for, successful AWW completion. Staff learned to check patient records for an up-to date AWW at every encounter. Every time a staffer opened a patient record in their EMR or chart, they learned to check for AWW status. If helping a patient without a recent AWW on the phone, staff would schedule an AWW during the call. If seeing a patient without a recent AWW in the office, staff would engage protocols to complete the AWW during that same visit.
- **Simplified EMR Templates** - Practices were encouraged to use our simplified AWW completion forms to create templates within their existing EMR. This facilitated the quick and easy capture of AWW data and vastly simplified related quality reporting and tracking.
- **Phone Outreach Protocols** - Premier Account Managers also helped practice staff successfully outreach to patients to bring them in for an AWW. Staff were provided—and educated on the use of—custom scripts, talking points and overview materials to comfortably and efficiently outreach to patients to schedule AWW appointments. Every practice was also motivated to meet daily and weekly quotas based upon their most recent *Patient Focus Lists*.

Thanks to our targeted efforts, custom tools, technology, and the dedication of our partner physicians, in 2015 we completed 14,049 Annual Wellness Visits, an increase of 2,809 percent over the previous year. The target for 2016 is 18,000 Annual Wellness Visits.

In *Exhibit A* below, an example screenshot of our Premier 360 Dashboard, illustrates that Premier PHC ACO is currently averaging 250 Annual Wellness Visits a week. Our efforts are projected to add an average of 3,000 completed Medicare Annual Wellness Visits during each of the 3 remaining months of 2016.

Exhibit A



Annual Wellness Visits



Our year-over-year performance results also suggest a direct correlation between successful Annual Wellness Visit completion and shared savings generation. In 2014, Premier Patient Healthcare ACO saved Medicare \$11.87 million with 19,000 aligned beneficiaries and in 2015, we've generated \$12.7 million in savings with 22,000 aligned beneficiaries.

About Premier Patient Healthcare

Premier Patient Healthcare, LLC is a licensed Medicare ACO serving five regions in North Texas and Southern Oklahoma. Premier is a physician-owned, physician-led and patient-driven organization providing coordinated services to its beneficiaries, increasing quality while reducing cost. Premier Accountable Care Organization is accountable for more than 20,500 Medicare beneficiaries. As an Accountable Care Organization, Premier agrees to be accountable for the quality, cost, and overall care of beneficiaries who are enrolled in Medicare's traditional fee-for-service program, while allowing the member physicians to maintain their independence.

With \$12.7 million in shared savings in 2015, Premier is distinguished with the following rankings:

- #1 highest savings generated by a physician-owned 2014 MSSP ACO startup in Texas and Oklahoma
- 4th highest savings generated across the U.S. by MSSP ACOs starting in 2014.
- Top 10 percent in shared savings earnings among all MSSP ACOs for 2015.

* Espiridion, Maria; Mulinti, MD, Raghavendra; Kemper, MPH, Suzanne E.; and Goebel, MD, Lynne J. (2016) "Patient Satisfaction with the Annual Wellness Visit," Marshall Journal of Medicine: Vol. 2: Iss. 3, Article 14