

THE QUARTERLY COMPASS

SPRING 2023
Newsletter



SAINT ALPHONSUS
HEALTH ALLIANCE

President's Message



This year's arrival of the spring season felt a bit delayed as snow falls continued in the Treasure Valley into early April. Now, with warm breezes and colorful blooms throughout the Treasure Valley, nature's awakening harkens the optimism of new growth and vitality. We see a parallel enthusiasm as we meet with your practices as the restrictions imposed by the COVID pandemic are lifted enabling you to resume usual care activities.

There are many examples of practice's engagement in preventive care for patients. We're seeing increased rates of annual wellness visits, breast and colon cancer screenings, better control of diabetes and hypertension, and increased compliance with medications prescribed to prevent future illness. We continue to see very low rates of preventable hospital admissions and now see declines in emergency department use. We're also seeing renewed enthusiasm from your staff who reach out to patients to assure continuous, high-quality care.



The Alliance has received praise from our contracted payers who appreciate the commitment of our staff and the high performance of the Network. We're also delighted to report the successful launch of new products with SelectHealth and MODA that expand the membership of the Alliance.

We thank you for your commitment to excellent patient care that emphasizes prevention, coordination, attention to social determinants of health, and access to care.

Charles Chodroff, MD, MBA, FACP
President
Saint Alphonus Health Alliance





The Saint Alphonsus Health Alliance Pharmacy Team works with your patients to assure their access to and proper use of their medications. Pharmaceuticals are the key therapeutic modality to address the adverse consequences of many chronic diseases. Below are two of the primary interventions that our pharmacy team currently performs.

Medication Adherence: ACE/ARB, statin, and/or diabetes medication (though not including insulin)

The majority of our telephonic calls to patients are focused on medication adherence. Our pharmacy technician contacts all patients who are more than 14 days late in refilling a compliance medication. If needed, the pharmacy team will refill medications and instruct the patient to pick it up. If there is a discrepancy or if the patient does not pick up the medication initiated by the pharmacy technician, a pharmacist follows up with the patient to identify any barriers. This is an ongoing process as these patients are followed throughout the year to assure patients are taking their medications regularly and optimizing their health.



Statin Use in Persons with Diabetes and Cardiovascular Disease

The pharmacy team identifies patients not taking a statin drug who have histories of diabetes or atherosclerotic cardiovascular disease. There is substantial, well-confirmed medical evidence to support these care guidelines. To optimize the timing of our outreaches to be in line with the providers workflow, the team is now timing their telephonic outreaches to encourage statin initiation to the day prior to the next office visit. This new workflow will help make it easy for statin initiation during your upcoming patient encounter. The pharmacist will also assess for any possible side effects to the statin medication and then send a note to the provider to document the appropriate exclusion codes (example: G72.0) during the next upcoming appointment to have the patient removed from the measure.

WARNING TO PRIMARY CARE PROVIDERS!

YOU MUST RENEW ALL NEW MEDICATIONS PRESCRIBED TO PATIENTS FOLLOWING A HOSPITAL DISCHARGE.

HOSPITALIST PROVIDERS WILL NOT ISSUE MEDICATIONS WITH REFILLS.

WE EXPECT ALL PATIENTS RECENTLY DISCHARGED FROM A HOSPITAL TO SCHEDULE A TRANSITION CARE MANAGEMENT (TCM) VISIT WITH THEIR PCP.

IF THE PCP DECIDES TO CONTINUE ANY NEW MEDICATION A NEW PRESCRIPTION MUST BE SENT TO THE PATIENT'S PHARMACY.

SAHA Risk Adjustment



The Saint Alphonsus Health Alliance Risk Adjustment Coding team works with practices to assure we are capturing accurate diagnoses for all patients. Our team includes a Risk Adjustment Coding Educator and two Risk Adjustment Coding Specialists.

Our Educator analyzes payer reports looking for trends and opportunities for coding and documentation improvement. Priority patient reports are also monitored and shared with your clinic staff as they are received by our payer partners. The Educator works directly with clinic staff and providers offering guidance on risk coding and documentation. New providers would benefit from a meeting with our Educator to assure they understand risk coding and the importance of diagnosing patient's illnesses to the highest level of specificity with supporting documentation.



Our Risk Coding Specialists meet quarterly with network clinics. They provide member rosters, chronic condition reports, and recapture rate summaries. Specialists act as a liaison between your clinic staff and the payers contracted under the Alliance who expect we achieve a recapture rate of 80%. The Specialists can perform chart audits to assure the accuracy of chronic condition recapture and supporting documentation.

We've developed pre-visit planning sheets as a tool to identify diagnoses previously reported in past years and gaps in quality. This tool has proven very helpful to help guide staff when patients present for annual wellness or preventive care visits.

The SAHA Risk Adjustment team will keep you up to date on changes in ICD-10 guidelines and as diagnoses are added or removed from the risk adjusted lists each year. Coding and documentation tips and cheat sheets are available by request.



Referrals for Pediatric Specialty Services



Please be aware that Saint Alphonus Health Alliance network has providers who can handle certain pediatric specialty services including ENT, urology, non-congenital orthopedics including fractures, sleep medicine, behavioral health, rheumatology, endocrinology, neurology, neurosurgery, and PT/OT. The challenge is that many of these services have age-determined restrictions.

Our Patient Care Liaison team will work with your practice and assure your patients get timely access and stay in network whenever possible. Please contact them with all pediatric specialty referral questions by calling **208-367-7247** or emailing at patientcareliaison@saintalphonus.org.

Referrals to non-network providers will likely cause a much higher out of pocket expense for your patients. Please utilize our Patient Care Liaison team for any referral questions.





Insurance Companies Provide Colorectal Screening Services

March was colorectal cancer screening month. Despite your best efforts, many of your patients do not receive this proven cancer screening service that has been shown to decrease mortality and morbidity. While colonoscopy remains the “gold standard” for screening due to its high sensitivity and specificity, we appreciate the inconvenience and cost to patients due to lost work time that this form of cancer screening requires. While not quite as sensitive or specific, fecal immune testing (FIT) is recognized as a proven alternative to colonoscopy.



Saint Alphonsus Health Alliance is focused on trying to improve our screening rates. We are working with our payer partners to develop innovative ways of promoting colorectal cancer screening.

One way might involve directly mailing FIT kits to your patients. We would do so only with agreement from your practice. Any positive tests will be communicated directly to the patient and your practice to assure you're aware of the results. We welcome your comments on this potential approach to increasing screening for this potential curable malignancy.

Thank you for your continued efforts in preventative care!

Welcome Dr. Twomey



We are excited to announce an addition to our team, Michael Twomey, MD., who will fill the position of Executive Medical Director previously held by Dr. Sheila Giffen.

Prior to joining us at Saint Alphonsus, Dr. Twomey practiced as a Family Medicine physician in Emmett, ID for six years and as the Medical Director for Valley Family Health Care. During that time he worked on provider education, clinic growth, and population health. Prior, he completed his residency in Boise and Caldwell. He has experience with many of our independent physician groups through training and collaboration and may have already been in touch with you.

Dr. Twomey was raised in northern Massachusetts, he went to a combined BS/MD program at Villanova and Drexel University in Philadelphia where he met his wife. The robust training programs for Family Medicine drew him to the mountain west where full spectrum care was expected. He has a family with two young daughters and enjoys hockey, biking, and the many birds of prey in Idaho.

Please join us in welcoming Dr. Michael Twomey and feel free to contact him at Michael.twomey@saintalphonsus.org





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