



Western Physicians' Alliance



NEWSLETTER

April 2013

THE ROLE OF HEALTH INTERNET TECHNOLOGY IN YOUR OFFICE

Population health management (PHM) has become the focus of patient-centered medical Homes (PCMH) accountable care organizations (ACOs), and healthcare systems that are concerned about impending changes in reimbursement. Because PHM entails continuous care of the entire patient population, it requires health IT solutions that automate routine tasks, facilitate communications, and maximize the effectiveness of care teams. Unlike the current model of care delivery, PHM requires that care be patient-centered, proactive, coordinated, continuous, and comprehensive.

PHM is designed to reduce the need for costly hospitalizations and emergency department visits by proactively keeping patients as healthy as possible. The PHM approach requires providers to change aspects of how they deliver care. Instead of focusing only on the care of individual patients, for example, they must also pay attention to the health status of their entire patient population. Instead

of just treating patients who seek care, they must also intervene with people who don't seek treatment for their ailments, who are out of compliance with their treatment plans, or who are basically healthy but at risk to become sick in the future.

Conclusion:

As the healthcare industry moves toward value-based reimbursement and various forms of financial risk, it is evident that PHM will be an invaluable strategy. The time to prepare for PHM is now, and the analytic and automation tools needed to build the necessary infrastructure are available. The biggest challenge facing providers who go down this road will be changing their culture and their orientation from the model of treating one patient at a time to managing the health of their population. Only by ensuring that every person in a population receives care team attention and assistance in self-management can an organization hope to improve quality and reduce costs to the extent required.

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Current Resident or



A collaborative model for achieving success

A strong partnership between Saint Mary's Health Plans and the Western Physicians' Alliance paves the way to better patient care, through programs like the **Quality Connect** (P4P) initiative, which measures primary care physician performance, or the **Spine Care Management Program**, which increases quality and reduces costs through best-practice management of spine-related medical issues.

We proudly support our WPA partners and look forward to a strong future, working together to improve the health and well-being of those we serve.

