CASE STUDY

Vermont Chronic Care Initiative Uses VITLAccess To Help Vermonters in Need of Health and Social Support

CHALLENGES

Delayed access to patients' post-admission care plans and medications

Difficulty validating patients' information and treatment plans, which was done manually and burdened clinicians

Patients not staying on care and medication plans

SOLUTION

Engaging VITLAccess, VITL's secure, web-based clinical portal, to enable VCCI's authorized users to view patient data submitted from participating clinicians and health care organizations

RESULTS

Greater clarity about patients' post-admission care plans and medications to help reinforce and support adherence

Easier to validate patients' information and treatment plans with less burden for clinicians

Provide long-term support well after patients' admission

VITL BY THE NUMBERS

14 VCCI team members actively view and access charts

4,000+ chart views in six months

Access to aggregated patient records and medications results in better outcomes for Vermonters

Angie White, RN, CCM, can meet her patients in a parking lot, a motel room, or the emergency department — wherever they need. This flexibility is especially important on her patients' most challenging days. Angie is a senior nurse case manager with the Vermont Chronic Care Initiative (VCCI). She and her colleagues spend their days providing holistic, intensive, and short-term case management services to Vermont residents with complex health and social needs.

VCCI's nurse case managers work closely with Vermonters during times in their lives when they're vulnerable. Individuals are referred to VCCI for complex care management by health care and human services providers, state colleagues, and partners, as well as through its care management predictive modeling methodology. VCCI also helps address health-related issues such as housing, food, and safety.

Jennifer Whitaker, RN, a nurse case manager, relishes the connections she makes with her patients. "We're able to meet them where they are," she said. Improving clinical outcomes for her patients is a priority, but just as important is "having them feel heard and getting them engaged so they're taking care of themselves," added Jennifer.

She regularly uses VITLAccess, VITL's secure, web-based clinical portal that enables authorized users to view patient data submitted from participating health care organizations. VITLAccess helps Jennifer and her colleagues by providing clinical and other information, including medications and medical appointments, said Heather McPhee, RN, CCM, VCCI's nurse administrator.

VITL

"We're able to meet [patients] where they are. [Just as important is] having them feel heard and getting them engaged so they're taking care of themselves." Jennifer Whitaker, RN, Nurse Case Manager

VITLAccess supports VCCI nurse case managers in two important ways, according to Heather: Providing timely access to clinical information and validating and confirming patient information, such as their contact details.

Niki Twohig, RN, a nurse case manager, starts her morning logging into VITLAccess, which allows her to track her patients' progress. This is helpful for patients who have been hospitalized, as she can rely on the system for updates on their discharge summaries and treatment plans.

Part of going home from the hospital is making sure your care plan and medications are ready for healing at home. Yet, only 20% to 30% of prescriptions are filled.[1] When patients can't stay on their care plan, the consequences can be serious. Research finds that, in the United States, the inability to take medications and follow medical advice results in 125,000 deaths each year,[2] approximately 10% of hospitalizations, and a financial cost of nearly $300 billion annually.[3]

Data in VITLAccess helps Niki support her patients as they successfully transition from a hospital visit back home. "With VITLAccess, you can see appointments and medication changes, which helps me reinforce care plans with patients," said Niki.

One of Niki's patients without reliable access to housing had forgotten his medications and lost his hospital discharge summary, which could have impacted his health if she hadn't been able to pull his records from the network.

She prevented a potentially dangerous outcome with her patient by viewing VITLAccess, which "played an important role in getting the medication list together and securing a safe plan in place for this young man," said Niki.

"VITLAccess helps relieve the burden placed on very busy primary care practices, in particular," said Heather, observing that clinicians are often burdened by administrative work, manually calling and faxing information back and forth with hospitals and other clinicians. "Among other benefits, it means we can access updated medication lists and care plans in VITLAccess, which means fewer delays and better care for our patients."

1. Viswanathan M, Golin CE, Jones CD, Ashok M, Blalock SJ, Wines RC, Coker-Schwimmer EJ, Rosen DL, Sista P, Lohr KN. Interventions to improve adherence to self-administered medications for chronic diseases in the United States: a systematic review. Ann Intern Med. 2012 Dec 4;157(11):785-95. doi: 10.7326/0003-4819-157-11-201212040-00538. PMID: 22964778.
2. Viswanathan M, et al.
3. Iuga AO, McGuire MJ. Adherence and health care costs. Risk Management and Healthcare Policy. 2014 Feb 20;7:35-44. doi: 10.2147/RMHP. S19801. PMID: 24591853; PMCID: PMC3934668.

ABOUT VITL: VITL is a nonprofit organization that supports the advancement of health care delivery and reform in Vermont through the aggregation and exchange of health information. Founded in 2005, VITL is the legislatively designated operator of the Vermont Health Information Exchange. VITL's vision is to be a leader in collaboratively delivering actionable data that leads to better health. Learn more about VITL's work at www.vitl.net.

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