Scaling New Heights

DotHouse Health Boosts Quality, Fosters Teamwork With Help From Azara DRVS and 'Mountain Climbers'

CHALLENGE

Boost care quality; engage clinical teams

DotHouse Health, a federally qualified health center (FQHC) located in Boston's Dorchester neighborhood, sought to boost its scores on several 2015 key clinical quality measures, including:

- Screenings for colon, cervical and breast cancers
- Hemoglobin A1c < 8
- Diabetes A1c tested every six months
- Follow-ups with patients in less than 48 hours post-emergency room visits and hospitalizations

The center needed to engage its clinical team and other staff on how well the center performed on the targeted measures. DotHouse, which serves 20,000 patients annually, had provided team members with care quality reports in a variety of formats, but most were difficult to decipher; it needed a more open, collaborative and streamlined approach. The center also needed a fast, robust platform that could transform vast amounts of patient data into meaningful, actionable information.

"DRVS allows us to work more independently and to perform the ad hoc analysis we need. The data is readily accessible to everyone who wants it. It's very user-friendly."

—Laura Santel, clinical project manager, DotHouse Health

SOLUTION

DRVS' analytical capability combined with staff creativity

DotHouse's clinical project manager Laura Santel, and Quyen Pham, quality and reporting coordinator, used Azara DRVS analytics and reporting platform to extract and organize key patient data points. Instead of burying the information in emails or printouts, they chose a visually-engaging, creative approach to sharing it with the center. Santel and Pham covered bulletin boards located in high-traffic hallways with colorful mountain ranges made from construction paper. Each mountain peak represented an annual clinical quality goal. The duo pushed finger-sized mountain climbers up the mountains when the center's quality scores improved.
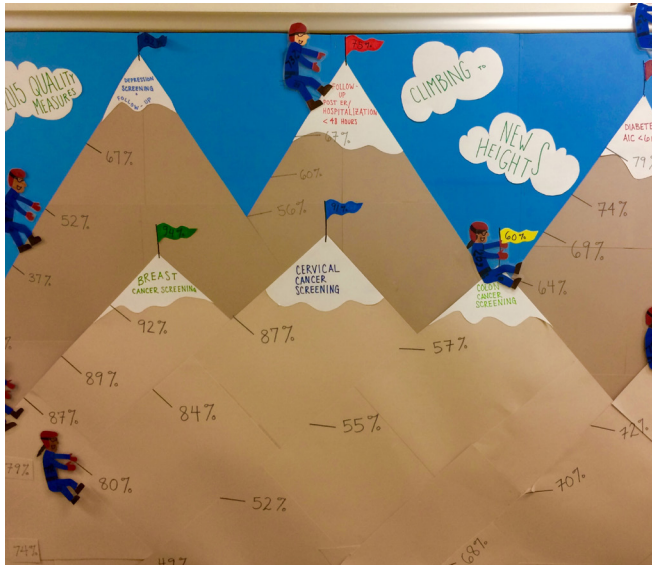
DotHouse Health has taken a creative approach to displaying the center's clinical quality measures. Performance on center-wide data is depicted via paper mountain ranges displayed on bulletin boards in the corridors. Staff members move tiny 'mountain men' figures up the sides of the mountains when the center's scores improve.

IMPACT
Key quality measures rise; staff engages with center data

DotHouse's colorectal cancer screening rate was 49 percent in January 2015, and the center aimed to hit 60 percent by year's end. It eclipsed its 2015 goal by May, hitting 64 percent. Other measures have also exceeded annual goals, including hemoglobin A1c, tested every six months.

Care teams are more engaged in the center's data. They can view how they compare to each other on several quality measures. The display of quality measure progress on the mountain climber boards sparked a friendly competition among the entire community health center and created an easily digestible format to view and celebrate performance improvements.

A different set of bulletin boards compared care team performance, and DRVS was integral to identifying differences in the results of each team. Some providers were surprised to learn they lagged behind their peers on some measures. The problem – in many cases – was not that they provided inadequate care. Rather, they did not properly document the care provided in the center's electronic health record (EHR). For example, colonoscopy reports were often scanned into the EHR, a method that fails to record the colonoscopy report as structured data. The quality and clinical staff also developed new workflows designed to boost the screening rates. As an example, medical assistants now offer an at-home FIT test kit to patients who are unwilling or unable to get a colonoscopy.

DotHouse also displays, in public areas, the performance of provider teams.

"We're trying to get staff more engaged with the data and to show them their (performance) numbers so that they are more incentivized to improve. We have also seen some friendly competition among providers, which helps to improve their numbers."

—Quyen Pham, quality and reporting coordinator, DotHouse Health