

Kansas Healthcare Collaborative

Background¹

“Kansas Healthcare Collaborative (KHC) is a nonprofit 501(c)3 organization dedicated to transforming health care through patient-centered initiatives that improve quality, safety and value. KHC was formed in 2008 by the Kansas Hospital Association and the Kansas Medical Society to act as a resource and continually enhance care provided to Kansans, and to become a trusted source for relevant and meaningful health care quality improvement education, evaluation and measurement.”

Problem

Rural Americans often face worsened healthcare outcomes than their suburban and urban counterparts.² Studies indicate that overuse is as prevalent in rural area as urban or suburban. Because there are already increased opportunity costs of longer patient waits to get appointments, longer travel to see providers, and longer waits in doctors’ offices, rural patients’ decreased access makes unnecessary tests and treatments even more costly.³

This case study offers an example for rural health clinics interested in improving care throughout their communities, particularly those with clinicians at multiple sites and that are interested in reducing overuse.

Solution

Leaders from KHC wanted to engage clinicians in education about overuse.^{4,5} Jill Daughhete, Quality Improvement Advisor, introduced *Choosing Wisely* to 26 practices and health systems during the summer of 2017.⁴ She provided each with *Choosing Wisely* materials, including “5 QUESTIONS to Ask Your Doctor Before You Get Any Test, Treatment, or Procedure” posters.⁶

While all health care institutions used *Choosing Wisely* posters to educate staff members and patients, Kiowa District Healthcare went further in their de-implementation strategies. During medical visits, clinicians shared *Choosing Wisely* materials directly with patients. Rather than asking patients if they had questions, Kiowa clinicians used open ended questions such as: “Now that you have had a chance to review the *Choosing Wisely* questions, what other questions do you have for me?” This shared decision making led providers to feel that their patients often left feeling more confident.⁴ Kiowa leaders also added *Choosing Wisely* materials to the checkout lists that patients received at the end of their visits.^{4,5}



Jill Daughhete

Results⁴

- “The posters created a culture for questions and conversations at the right moment. *Choosing Wisely* is the path of least resistance. It is the easiest shared decision-making tool to train staff about appropriate care. It’s really applicable in any practice,” said Daughhetee.
- “Creating an intervention in small, rural practices has its advantages. They are usually tight-knit communities where people know each other. It can also be easier to get buy-in from a small team whose members are used to being nimble and creative, and working with limited resources at times,” said Daughhetee.

Patient Engagement⁵

- The shared decision making nature of open-ended clinician-patient conversations often made clinicians feel that their patients left visits feeling more confident.
- Clinicians noted positive feedback specifically from the elder population, as they often had come to appointments prepared with questions to ask.

Challenges⁵

- **Rural Setting.** “Some of the challenges in a rural setting can be that staff play multiple roles at once, i.e., working as both manager and as quality officer, and it can be difficult to gather metrics if, for instance, multiple imaging centers service one facility,” said Daughhetee.
- **Extended Patient Visits.** Having these conversations with patients sometimes increased visit time, although doing so reduced phone calls that patients made to clinical office staff after visits.

Keys to Success⁵

- **Start Small.** Kiowa leaders emphasized the idea that health care institutions interested in implementing *Choosing Wisely* initiatives do so in an easy and accessible way. “*Choosing Wisely* is a simple tool that can be used to have conversations. Use the *Choosing Wisely* resources to start small,” said Melissa Stroh, a physician assistant at Kiowa.
- **Printing *Choosing Wisely* Materials on Check-Out Lists.** *Choosing Wisely* materials were placed on the back of patient checkout materials so patients were able to reference them at home.

Core Interventions^{4,5}

- Displaying “5 QUESTIONS to Ask Your Doctor Before You Can Get Any Test, Treatment or Procedure” in exam rooms
- Clinicians asking open-ended questions to increase provider-patient conversation
- Printing materials on checkout slips

References

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