



Red Carpet Care for Better Health and Lower Costs for “Super-Utilizer” Patients

All too often, the health care system makes it difficult for patients to get the right care at the right time. The predominant fee-for-service payment system drives more treatments, tests and procedures, with no accountability for better outcomes, which is particularly harmful for people with complex medical needs and those who pay for them.

The Problem

Only 10 states have higher per capita costs and poorer overall health than Ohio, according to a 2014 report by the Health Policy Institute of Ohio. “Super-Utilizer” patients—those with complex medical and social needs—are among the sickest 5 percent of the population and also account for 60 percent of the nation’s health care costs. Super-Utilizers typically have one or more chronic illnesses that are poorly managed, lack strong ties to a primary care provider and often wind up in the emergency department (ED) or are admitted to the hospital, driving up costs without better outcomes.

The Approach

Better Health Partnership developed Red Carpet Care, a pilot program tailored for Super-Utilizer populations. In Red Carpet Care, a health system, two health insurers and two community organizations joined forces to intensively manage care and remove barriers that often lead to avoidable use of expensive ED and hospital services.

The MetroHealth System, a safety net system serving Cuyahoga County, established Red Carpet Care clinics within two of its Family Medicine practices. Each clinic was staffed by a care coordinator who invited 130 people to enroll who met the following criteria: high numbers of hospital stays and ED visits; ties to MetroHealth; and health insurance from Medical Mutual of Ohio, a commercial plan, or Buckeye Community Health Plan, a Medicaid managed care plan. West Side Catholic Center and University Settlement, community organizations near the Red Carpet Care clinics, also contributed with resources to help meet patients’ needs.

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Key features of the program include:

- Insurers' support for care coordinators paired with agreements to share savings with MetroHealth
- Weekly collaboration of care coordinators, case managers and community organizations to find the best ways to meet patients' needs
- Care coordinators use registries to proactively follow up with patients
- Real-time alerts to care coordinators when patients are in ED or hospital
- Home visits to patients when needed; frequent check-in calls
- Patients had direct-dial phone numbers of care coordinators, often averting ED visits
- Cell phones provided to eligible patients to ensure seamless communication with care coordinators
- Longer appointment times to address patients' multiple needs
- Meaningful provider-patient relationships

Lessons Learned

Establishing trusted relationships among clinical care coordinators and health insurers' case managers optimized resources and communications. More access to providers via extended visits, phone calls and home visits led to fewer ED visits and lower hospital use. Collaborating partners gained greater understanding of patients' medical and psychosocial needs. Patients experienced the "caring" part of health care and became more engaged in their own health. Early results for Medical Mutual patients of Red Carpet Care include:

- Compared with costs of a control group, Red Carpet Care participants cost \$4,734.36 less per person, per year.
- Across 67 Red Carpet Care patients, estimated total savings are \$317,200 a year.

Learn More

Better Health can play a key role in the collaboration, development and data analysis of programs that help various organizations work together to transform today's health care system. Please contact us at info@betterhealthpartnership.org to learn more.



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