

Joint Commission Recognition Validates Scripps' Evidence Based Practices

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California's Scripps Green and Scripps Encinitas hospitals earned top Joint Commission recognition for their quality measure achievements in heart attack, heart failure, pneumonia and surgical care. That means that in 95 out of 100 opportunities to provide an evidence-based practice, they did so.

The Joint Commission recognition validates the Scripps Health organizations' attention to detail at the care level because it scrutinizes

specifics within the care process and looks for exemplary performance. Brenda Flores, Director of Performance Improvement at Scripps Encinitas, who has responsibility for all reported measures, explains that it's the attention to before, during and after treatment – all evidence-based, that leads to success. She talks about the recognition's larger meaning to their care. "Of course it's an honor, but it's also a validation that our 'patient first' practices work on all levels. For example, we've done a care management redesign around congestive heart failure and joint replacement, plus implemented a program called 'STRIDE' for joint replacement patients."

Implemented in July 2010, the STRIDE program educates patients pre-surgery on pain expectations, exercises to do beforehand, what to expect once discharged, and how long they will be in the hospital. Process standardization and overall communication is the rule – every person involved in the care sees the same thing. For instance, patient rooms feature goal boards that state specific measures of what needs to happen for the day, such as "today you will walk 20 feet." Scripps saw

a decrease in length of stay and no increase in readmission. "Patients love it," Flores said. "They feel involved in their care and ready, knowledgeable, with no fear of unknowns."

Care Management redesign, implemented in July 2011, was a pilot for joint replacement and congestive heart failure at Scripps Encinitas, so successful that it's replicated in some form throughout Scripps Health. Flores described the basics as, "The process helps assure that our patients get what they need while they're with us, but also after they get home, so they are not readmitted unnecessarily." The interdisciplinary round is a key component, involving the physician, the nurse, the pharmacist, the Scripps 'navigator', and the patient's family. "The group meets at the same time every morning to discuss the plan for the day as well as the rest of the patient's stay." It eliminates guesswork and redundancy. The inpatient navigator is the hub of communication and the primary contact for the patient, helping plan the discharge. The outpatient navigator for high-risk patients meets the patient, and then

follows them for 30 days at home, providing a safety net. The highly favorable results include a decrease in length of stay, lower readmission rates and a huge jump in patient satisfaction.

At Scripps Green, Dr. Maida Soghikian, Medical Director, Performance Improvement, had much the same thoughts about the Joint Commission recognition. “It’s great to see our work validated, particularly in the Care Management arena. We do teamwork really well here, which makes the critical difference when working on new measures, too.” She mentioned Scripps Green’s critical improvement in SCIP measures that implement evidence-based practices aimed at reducing perioperative adverse events such as blood clots and infections.

Soghikian credited teamwork for

the ability to solve process issues as they arise, bringing a metric to the team and working it out. “One of our nurses suggested that we standardize bladder catheter removal time, for instance. Now we know that unless the doctor writes an exclusion, then 8 a.m. on post-op day 2 is catheter removal time.” Attention to measures is attention to quality and safety; if one metric falls out, regardless of who may be responsible, the practitioner gets an email. Communicating that provides an opportunity to correct the issue, address a problem or fix a process. She added that the medical residents play a key role by suggesting novel ways to enhance quality of care, providing input from the front lines. “Our residents are not only creative and technologically savvy, but clearly embrace what we strive for – they really make us look good.”

Scripps teamwork extends beyond

hospital walls. “The Scripps Green hospital medical staff and the Scripps Clinic Medical Group are integrated, allowing near seamless communication and care transitions. Soghikian said, “Primary care physicians know if their patient is admitted and discharged, as well as what they may need to do to help follow up.”

The success of Scripps Health programs centers on the patient’s firm entrenchment in their own care, education of patient and family on what their health situation involves, and open communication between the various care providers and their patients. Explained Flores, “We focus on the patient, what they want. Then, the attention to processes simply cements the performance and the care.”

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