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GRANT  
SPOTLIGHT

**First in  
Primary  
Care** **Broadway**  
M E D I C A L C L I N I C

July 2021

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**W**hen sitting down to talk with Broadway Medical Clinic's Internal Medicine physicians; Drs. Hirsch, Howatt, and Hrbek about their Portland IPA (PIPA) grant projects, the consensus among the group was that the PIPA grant program has provided needed support and funding to seed and germinate provider-led ideas and incentivize collective action, to increase value and service provided to patients. Dr. Hirsch started our conversation by saying, "The grants have helped us do things we otherwise may not have pursued. Fundamentally, it is hard to take on the risk involved in doing a project when the outcomes are uncertain". The grants have provided the opportunity to try things, and regardless of the outcome, learn lessons that ultimately make for better clinical care. Dr. Howatt, who has attended many meetings over the years that only discuss ideas, summed it up by saying, "Grants provide opportunities to actually do things, rather than just talk about them".

Notably, Dr. Hrbek described some unexpected benefits of working on grant projects by saying it has helped promote a sense of accountability, an obligation to put forth the effort. Each agreed that when grants support the project ideas, there is less resistance amongst staff and colleagues to thinking outside the box and trying new things to improve processes or patient care.

**PROJECT: Alternative Care Visits for the Disabled**

A great example of outside-the-box thinking (and maybe a bit of a premonition) lies in the 2018 grant project titled "Alternate Care Visits for the Disabled". Long before the pandemic, the idea of reaching out to patients who might find it hard, or near impossible to physically come into the office was developed and led by Dr. Hirsch and Dr. Hrbek. The grant project focused on patients with chronic disease processes, advanced age, and extreme mobility issues. Historically these patients have been the most likely to not show their appointments or not adhere to treatment plans or medication regimens. In response to this issue, the idea of connecting the doctor and patient telephonically at periodic intervals to improve compliance with treatment plans and identify social barriers to care was born. Their goal was to identify as many appropriate patients as possible and measure the number of patients engaged. Ultimately, they succeeded in onboarding over 100 patients in the program, improving care among this vulnerable population through tracking patients with diabetes and hypertension. In retrospect, it would seem they had gazed into a crystal ball and unwittingly prepared for the telephonic visit revolution induced by the pandemic that would arrive just a few years later.

**PROJECT: Care Compacts with Cardiology**

In the spirit of building a functioning "medical neighborhood", Dr. Hirsch and her colleagues embarked upon a 2018 PIPA grant intended to improve clinical care by enhancing collaborative relationships with community providers and



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improve communication and connectivity with a local cardiology group. Workflows were analyzed and restructured to simplify the referral process and, efforts to improve the flow of clinical information helped BMC providers stay in the loop with patients. This improved communication enhanced appropriate follow-up and reduced redundant or unnecessary testing. The process improvement resulting from this project has been a positive for patients and providers alike as lines of communication and feedback continue to be reinforced and benefit all parties.

**PROJECT: Population Health Tool Implementation**

In 2019, with the support of an IPA grant, Dr. Howatt helped spearhead the development of BMC's Population Health Tool, a modular, cloud-based IT solution to collate clinical, financial, claims, and patient-derived data to manage large patient populations in a quality-focused, cost-efficient manner. The pop health tool was the envisioned solution to support the transition to value-based care and has been very helpful to their robust RN care management program led by BMC's Assistant Administrator Heather Bardfield, RN, and her clinical and IT teams. It assists with capturing large population analytics, identifying high-risk patients, and has increased well-care visits to close care gaps and prompt HCC code capture. At the end of the project year, three key performance indicators were measured, and results show adolescent well-care visits rose by 25%, AWV completion by 5%, and HCC capture by 2%. Dr. Howatt feels it has prepared the clinic for the future and even shifted patient attitudes about their care, changed the depth of engagement with large populations of patients, and taken it to "a totally different level." A perfect example is the case of a patient who initially called about getting an ear lesion looked at, which turned into an annual wellness visit, which in turn led to a valuable discussion of advanced directives.

**PROJECT: Adolescent to Adult Primary Care Transition**

Given Broadway Medical Clinic's dedication to serving both pediatric and adult populations, it only made sense that they identified challenges inherent in the transition adolescent patients make from their trusted pediatrician to adult primary care. The internists in the group described feeling blindsided at times when taking on complex young patients. Pediatricians voiced a desire to provide a warmer handoff for these patients, so in 2021 Dr. Howatt applied for and received an IPA grant to support improving this transition. The project goal is to create a process to help pediatric patients seamlessly transition to adult care. Admittedly, the pandemic derailed progress on the grant but, a more formal process has been developed and they now feel prepared to implement this valuable work.

I would be remiss in not mentioning that numerous other physicians at Broadway Medical Clinic have led grant projects, and many dedicated staff members have helped drive results. Alas, finding the time to interview all of them was just not in the cards. However, it is clear from our discussion that Broadway Medical Clinic's success is the byproduct of many talented individuals who have aligned to work together towards shared goals, enhancing the care of their patients.