

Role Clarity: the Corner Stone of Share the Care

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Project Description:

In order to limit the burden of primary care that most often weighs on primary care providers, leading to dissatisfaction, burnout, and costly turnover, we must find ways to Share the Care among team members with different scopes of practice. I set out to find a scalable way to implement Share the Care in a multi-practice, primary care organization, where each team member feels invested in their role and the relationships they develop with their teammates and patients.

Outcome - Oriented Objective:

After completing a series of role clarification exercises in the first half of 2020, our teamlets, made up of primary care providers and medical assistants, will report an improvement in role clarity, in their teamlet relationship, and that they have the tools and training to succeed in their role; a more equal sense of personal job responsibility; and reduced burnout.

Solution:

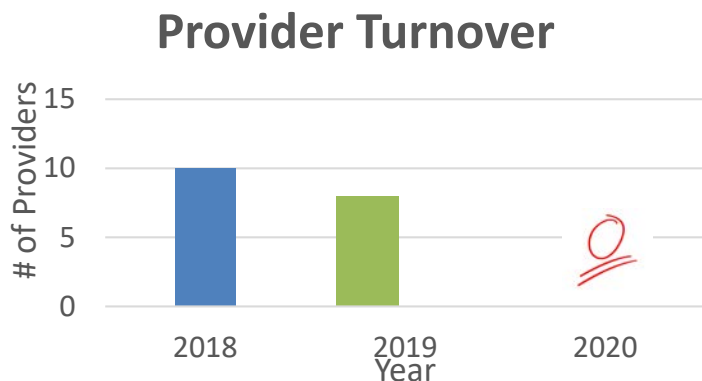
- In order to spread Share the Care among our health center teams, I invested in role clarification for our primary care teamlets: defining roles and developing training and observations to reinforce these roles. In Fall 2019, I piloted a series of role clarity exercises with our training team with the plan to roll out the exercises to all primary care teams in the first half of 2020. Thus far the training team and two health center teams completed the role clarity exercises. We implemented the training and observation checklists for new primary care team members that define and reinforce roles. The ultimate goal is for each primary care teamlet to engage in the role clarity exercises together to ensure all team members are aware of each others' roles and responsibilities, as well as to utilize the observation checklists for existing members of the primary care teams to reinforce roles.

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Results

- I started this project in January 2019 and ran the first pilot in December 2019, and we are now in the scaling phase.
- We conducted a pre-survey among primary care providers and medical assistant teamlets in December 2019/January 2020 on role clarity, the teamlet relationship, the degree to which primary care providers and medical assistants have the tools and training to succeed in their role, personal job responsibility and burnout. We have not yet conducted the post-survey.
- I compared data on provider turnover from January 2018 to the present.



Next Steps

- The project is not yet finished. We have implemented the training and observation checklists for new primary care team members that define and reinforce roles. Only the training team and two health center teams have completed the role clarity exercises, and we have not implemented the observations for existing team members.
- We are in the process of developing a training for our center managers who oversee the primary care teams to give them the knowledge and the tools they need to understand the primary care service line and support the primary care teams. With the center managers' buy-in, the goal is to integrate the role clarity exercises into health center meetings and conduct ongoing observations of existing members of the primary care teams to reinforce roles.

Lessons Learned

- We do not yet have the qualitative data from our post-survey, yet our preliminary results on turnover are encouraging.
- While the training and observation checklists we developed are specific to PPMM health center procedures, the take-away is that checklists must reflect the organization's values and expectations for that role on the care team.
- The role clarity exercises can be utilized by any team to define roles. While checklists reinforce the role of individual team members, the exercises facilitate a shared understanding of the roles and responsibilities of all team members. In addition the exercises also clarify the expectations that team members have of each other.
- While role clarity may reduce the administrative burden for primary care providers, it does not flatten the hierarchy on the primary care team. This would be a separate effort.