Partnering with Ambulatory Frontline RN Staff, Patient Partners, & Volunteer Health Advisors To Develop Patient Hypertension Education Tools

Ellen Lones, Ph.D., R.N.; Fiona McCaughan, R.N., M.S., M.B.A.; Susan Natale, M.S., R.N.; Ziva Mann, M.A.; James Figueiredo, Ed.M

The Problem
Hypertension is a major health care issue for which many patients do not have a full understanding, and may need assistance in managing their self care. Teaching patients about hypertension incorporates plain language, teach-back, and motivational interviewing as a normal part of the teaching process. A partnership among RNs, Patient Partners, and Volunteer Health Advisors (VHAs) can help to develop patient teaching tools that reflect the patient’s voice.

Aim/Goal
In the CHA Collaborative Hypertension (HTN) Patient Care Model, the Ambulatory Registered Nurse (RN) plays a key role in patient assessment, blood pressure monitoring, patient care planning, and educating hypertensive patients about self-management. Ambulatory RNs assess hypertensive patients, and utilize appropriate information based upon patient literacy and cultural information to teach patients about hypertension. The goal of development of patient education materials is to provide standardized, understandable, interactive tools that are easily accessed during the patient encounter. Ultimately, the aim is to help patients become engaged in their care, understand what they can do to improve their blood pressure numbers, and to actually improve those numbers as a result of RN collaboration and teaching.

The Team

The Interventions
Design / develop interactive, easy-to-use patient education materials (tools) in partnership with CHA Ambulatory frontline staff RNs, Patient Partners, and Volunteer Health Advisors. Make the standardized training materials that Ambulatory RNs use for teaching patients self-management of hypertension readily accessible in the EMR.

The Results/Progress to Date
Prior to tools design / development, a survey was sent to CHA Ambulatory RNs to rate themselves in their confidence level to teach patients about hypertension. Survey results indicate that, overall, RNs were confident to teach patients about self-management of hypertension.

A team of Ambulatory Frontline RN Staff developed three patient hypertension education tools that were reviewed by Patient Partners and Volunteer Health Advisors to assess text and graphics for readability, understandability, and usefulness for patient encounters. The tools can now be used during the RN Visit and accessed in the EMR.

Lessons Learned
- Importance of reflecting the patient voice in patient education materials to make them understandable and useful in patient encounters.
- Necessity of accessing community resources to gather detailed information specific to life style changes for the hypertensive patient.
- Need to continue developing standardized patient education tools utilizing the patient voice perspective as this was an engaging, successful approach for RN Staff, Patient Partners, and VHAs to develop the hypertension tools.

Next Steps/What Should Happen Next
- Train RNs to teach patients about hypertension self-management utilizing the tools.
- Utilize the newly developed, reportable fields in the EMR to capture specific education during the RN Visit.