

Continuity and Coordination of Care

As you know, communication between primary care physicians and specialists, including behavioral health specialists, is crucial to the over-all care of patients. Sanford Health Plan's goal is to ensure that our members receive seamless, continuous and appropriate care regarding diagnosis, medication and treatment plans whether in an inpatient or outpatient setting. Coordination of care is essential to promote safe, proper and unduplicated health care.

Below you will find data that the Plan has gathered to assess the status of continuity and coordination of care among our practitioner network. Practitioners are asked in our annual Provider Satisfaction Survey about their satisfaction with the state of coordination of care among practitioners who have mutual patients. Members are also asked in our annual CAHPS member satisfaction survey if they feel their practitioner seemed up-to-date about care they have received elsewhere. In completing medical record reviews on our HEDIS sample population, it was also noted in a majority of diabetic records that there was no communication of eye exam results to the primary diabetes care practitioner. Exchange of relevant clinical information needs to be consistently taking place between all practitioners including, for example, between MDs, DOs, ODs, DPMs, mid-level practitioners, etc. Analysis of this information in conjunction with other data collection activities that the Plan has conducted, demonstrate that there is room for improvement in the arena of care coordination.

Provider Satisfaction Survey	2007	2008
Coordination of Care Among Providers:		
Of your patients you refer to other providers, how many referred providers inform you they have seen the patient? % Responding Some	62.6%	62.7%
Of your patients you refer to other providers, how many referred providers inform you they have seen the patient? % Responding Every	34.3%	28.9%
Of your patients you refer to other providers, to how many of these providers do you send the patients' clinical information? % Responding Some	16.3%	20.5%
Of your patients you refer to other providers, to how many of these providers do you send the patients' clinical information? % Responding Every	79.6%	75.9%
Have you ever been notified by a behavioral health provider that one of your patients is receiving behavioral health care? % Responding Yes	27.0%	34.1%
Of the behavioral health providers who have informed you about your patients receiving behavioral health care, to what extent do you consult with each other regarding patients' ...		
% Responding Always or Usually		
Diagnosis	42.3%	41.4%
Treatment Plans	46.2%	43.3%
Medications	38.5%	43.3%
Member Satisfaction Survey	CAHPS® 2007	CAHPS® 2008
Coordination of Care:		
In the last 12 months, how often did your personal doctor seem informed and up-to-date about the care you got from other doctors or other health providers that you have seen? (% responding always or usually)	70.2%	78.4%

In an effort to foster coordinated care, we would ask that you remember these important aspects of achieving coordination of care:

- Systematically send relevant clinical information in a timely manner to the practitioner the patient is being referred to or has been referred from. Depending on the circumstances, relevant clinical information can include any of the following:
 - Consultation/visit notes
 - Progress notes
 - Treatment plans

- Hospital records/discharge summaries
- Operative and pathology reports
- Rehabilitation evaluations
- History and physical
- Lab and imaging reports
- Therapy notes
- Medication lists
- Review clinical information in a timely manner and determine if further contact is needed to initiate additional care/visits.
- Contact patients after discharge from a facility and coordinate follow-up care with the patient and/or family.
- For patients transitioning to another level of care, develop a transition plan with the patient and/or family.
- A Primary Care Practitioner (PCP) should oversee all general medical health care for a patient.

We understand that it is not always possible to provide this information in cases where members may self-refer to specialists, etc. Therefore, Sanford Health Plan also encourages members to assist you in promoting continuity and coordination of their care by doing the following:

- Finding a PCP to oversee their general medical health care.
- Always identifying their PCP when receiving health care from other practitioners or specialists.
- Requesting that their medical records be sent to their PCP from other practitioners or specialists.
- Notifying their PCP when changes are made to their medication regimen by another practitioner or specialist.
- Notifying their PCP if they are admitted to the hospital.

We appreciate the quality care you provide for our members. If you have any suggestions on tools that you would like to see the Plan provide that would assist you in providing coordinated patient care, please feel free to call me at 605-328-6834 or toll free at 1-800-805-7938.

Sincerely,



Michael P. Crandell, MD
Medical Director