

The Dimock Center: Boston Connected Community Improves Transitions of Care



The Dimock Center, an urban health center, provides Boston residents with convenient access to comprehensive high-quality, low-cost health care and human services. Dimock handles more than 76,000 visits annually from 17,000 unique patients that represent a wide range of socioeconomic and ethnic backgrounds.

Challenge

Integration of Hospital and Primary Care Patient Data

In the past, when Dimock's primary care patients received inpatient or Emergency Department acute care services at local hospitals, the health center did not receive electronic discharge summaries automatically from local hospitals. This hindered Dimock's ability to deliver optimal care as these patients transitioned from the hospital to the ambulatory setting.

Similar scenarios unfolded in reverse due to the manual transmission of patient data, for instance the

Dimock's Obstetrics Clinic to the Labor and Delivery departments at the hospitals. This made it difficult to integrate all Continuity of Care Documents (CCDs), a benefit that could be realized through the utilization of innovative health IT solutions.

Solution

Accelerate Connectivity Using Health Information Exchange

Dimock set out to improve all transitions of care for several patient populations, including, adult primary care, pediatrics, and expectant mothers. Based on the input from champions on the clinical and information technology units, Dimock elected to streamline communications using Health Information Exchange (HIE) technology, specifically the statewide HIE known as the Mass Hlway. This conduit allowed Dimock to electronically share CCDs with two of Boston's cornerstone institutions, Beth Israel Deaconess Medical Center (BIDMC) and Boston Children's Hospital (Children's).

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"What may feel like a daunting investment now promises to pay tangible dividends in the future."

—Dr. Holly Oh
Chief Medical Officer, The Dimock Center

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These three healthcare providers applied for and received financial support for their health information technology-enabled project through a Mass HIway Implementation grant. The Massachusetts eHealth Institute (MeHI) awarded these grants to collaborative projects between two or more healthcare organizations that sought to improve patient care coordination and reduce costs by connecting to the Mass HIway.

Impact

Reduce Redundancy, Lower Costs, and Improve Delivery

The partnership formed between Dimock, BIDMC, and Children's established a framework for building a seamless connected community poised to improve transitions of care for the patients they serve.

The urban health center and the city hospitals are actively piloting the use of the Mass HIway technology to rapidly exchange real-time, comprehensive, and accurate patient information between ambulatory and hospital settings.



The deployment of Health Information Exchange in this manner facilitates medication reconciliation, reduces errors, and eliminates testing duplications and examination redundancies, and thereby improves healthcare delivery and lowering costs.

Adopting and implementing HIE technology allows critical information to securely follow patients wherever they go, moving from one facility to another. Health IT empowers all providers to enhance transitions of care between inpatient and outpatient environments across the Commonwealth.

“There’s tremendous power in having instantaneous access to Electronic Health Records on screen, at our fingertips. It’s so much easier to communicate and collaborate with internal clinical staff colleagues and external partner practitioners...and engage our patients in conversations about their health care.”

—*Dr. Holly Oh, Chief Medical Officer, The Dimock Center*
