Mancelona Family Practice: A PCMH Success Story

“A good practice should be willing to do it,” says Dr. Albert Brown of Mancelona Family Practice.

Nestled in Michigan’s beautiful northern Lower Peninsula, Mancelona Family Practice, in the rural city of Mancelona, is unique in the world of Patient-Centered Medical Homes (PCMHs) — a selective designation offered annually by Blue Cross Blue Shield of Michigan. “Any good practice already delivers patient-centered medicine. The official PCMH designation validates the high quality of care our practice has been delivering to the community for many years,” Brown noted.

PCMH-based practices focus on each patient’s health goals and needs through a physician-led team approach. The team coordinates patient care across all settings throughout a patient’s life. PCMH is designed to focus on each patient to improve his or her experience of care and improve health outcomes, ideally leading to lower costs over the long term.

The Mancelona Family Practice serves 6,635 patients and is led by two physicians, Drs. Brown and Jennifer Leino. The 13-person office is supported by Office Manager Tammy Dunne, who led the PCMH initiative with Dr. Brown.

“I knew that PCMH was something our office needed to get into,” Dunne recalled. “It’s a good way for us to reach our patients and give them better care. And yet I didn’t have the time to learn all about PCMH and attend to my day-to-day duties.”

Reaching Out

A guide was needed to help the Mancelona practice make its way through the PCMH process. The practice turned to the Medical Advantage Group (MAG), a leading health care consulting and management company that specializes in helping practices move to a PCMH model. The Mancelona practice was assigned to MAG Practice Consultant Dave Nicholson.

“It’s common for offices to feel overwhelmed at the start,” Nicholson said. “I offer a new way to look at their processes — and it’s a lot of new information to absorb. Still, after our third meeting, Dr. Brown was completely committed to the PCMH process.”

Nicholson added that often medical practices are already — or close to — meeting many of the PCMH requirements. “My job was to help the staff realize what was already in place and then identify missing pieces. This is a practice that is highly engaged. We just worked together to tighten up policies and to improve workflow and processes. From start to finish, Mancelona Family Practice became designated as a PCMH in less than a year, completing the nomination process in only four months.”

As part of that process, a random site visit was conducted by Blue Cross Blue Shield of Michigan. It reviewed all of Mancelona’s policies and processes that had been collected in a PCMH binder. Creating that binder was a daunting task. “Dave was able to help us translate Blue Cross’ criteria into practices and policies, as well as get our referrals and policies on paper and in the style appropriate for Blue Cross. He guided us in the preparation of our materials so we could clearly say, ‘This is how we’re doing it,’” Dunne said.

The PCMH binder serves as a comprehensive tool that can be used for training new staff members. “MAG helps build that tool, and then we take best practices to customize them for Mancelona Family Practice,” Nicholson said. “I shared policy examples from other practices that were very strong and tailored them for this practice.”

Community Is Key

Although the Mancelona practice had a head start in terms of meeting a number of PCMH requirements, it shared a common oversight with other practices before instituting PCMH, and that was educating its patients and staff members about how PCMH works. So the practice developed a brochure that defined PCMH — and its benefits — for patients. Each patient is required to verbally agree to partner with Mancelona in his or her care. Working together, the practice and patient create a self-management plan to meet that patient’s health care goals. “To date, of the 3,763 patients who are eligible for PCMH, 469 patients have been notified of the PCMH process and are actively working within it,” Dunne noted. “But we’re constantly working to improve this.”

Mancelona Family Practice is particularly successful, Nicholson said, because of its strong relationship with its community. As an example, each year, the community rallies around the Mancelona Public Schools’ Ironmen and their chance for a state championship. Mancelona Family Practice provides free sports physicals every year for the

Physician Office Staff
Two physicians
One physician assistant
One family nurse practitioner
One office manager
Five medical assistants
Three front-desk staff members

Partners in Shared Space
One home health representative
One physical therapist
One radiology technician
One lab technician
One registration – Kalkaska Hospital
mighty Ironmen, however, its community involvement doesn’t stop there. The practice also offers diabetes meetings for caregivers and patients in the community, buys ads in the local paper to promote PCMH, and maintains a website and Facebook page so it can virtually interact with patients and the community at large.

“We’re looking to provide total patient care,” Dunne said. “For instance, we had a patient who was unable to manage her diabetes because she lost her house to a fire. We helped her connect with services in our community that led to housing for her and her family, and she could redirect her attention to managing her diabetes.”

Continuing Improvement

The PCMH model requires constant review, improvement and communication. The entire Mancelona Family Practice staff meets monthly to discuss how the practice’s goals are progressing. The PCMH process is further enhanced at the Mancelona practice because it had already implemented electronic medical records (EMR).

“The more you automate your records, the more time you have with the patient,” Brown noted. “Before we had flow sheets to show progress and make sure their meds are right, now we can print off their medication list and hand it to them. Having an organized approach helps you to consider things you haven’t thought of before.”

As a part of evaluating the care it offers, the Mancelona practice resurrected its Patient Satisfaction Survey Mailbox. Patients are able to complete an anonymous survey about the care they received. “Our patients tell us that they really like the one-stop shopping we’re able to offer. After their exam, they can walk down the hall to get lab work, digital X-rays, even physical therapy,” Dunne said.

“Any provider is always trying to do the best he can for his patients by providing good information and feedback on how they are progressing,” Brown said. “PCMH helps foster better communication in a more systematic way.” He also appreciates that Blue Cross Blue Shield of Michigan provides PCMH-designated physicians an enhanced fee for office visits to compensate them for the extra time and effort required to practice as a medical home.

PCMH: A Journey

“Now that we’ve implemented PCMH, we’re at the forefront, but it’s also inevitable that practices will be held to a higher standard in the future,” Brown said, adding that his practice continues to work on implementing more of the 128 parameters to reach its next PCMH nomination and designation.

PCMH is a journey, an ongoing transformative process that supports improved patient outcomes. The PCMH designation rewards practices for delivering advanced primary care services. According to Blue Cross Blue Shield of Michigan, PCMH-designated physicians are succeeding in more effectively managing patients’ care that can keep them healthy and prevent complications. To compare, in 2012, PCMH practices had a 23.8 percent lower rate of adult ambulatory care sensitive inpatient admissions than non-PCMH practices.

“Transforming and improving care is an ongoing process,” Nicholson said.

This article was adapted from the original “Mancelona Family Practice: A PCMH Success Story” article written by Beverly Moody on behalf of Medical Advantage Group, a leading health care consulting and management company that provides practice transformation services and integrated custom solutions in performance improvement, technology, patient-centered medicine and accountability to assist clients to achieve clinical integration and the Triple Aim (improve quality of care, increase health of community and decrease costs). The Medical Advantage Group has more than a decade of experience developing the largest patient-centered provider network in Michigan and one of the 10 largest in the United States. For more information on Medical Advantage Group, please contact Carrie Spanor at 734-302-2128 or visit www.medadvgrp.com.

Dr. Albert Brown of Mancelona Family Practice is a member of the Michigan Academy of Family Physicians (MAFP). His practice approached the Medical Advantage Group (MAG), an organization that partners with MAFP to assist family physicians in transforming their practices to become PCMH-designated. Since one of the requirements of becoming a PCMH is an association with a physician organization, the Mancelona Family Practice availed itself of one of MAFP’s member benefits and joined Michigan Family Physicians Care, Inc., an independent physician association (IPA) developed exclusively for MAFP members to maximize and achieve benefits from pay-for-performance programs.

Michigan Family Physicians Care, Inc. is just one of the 53 IPAs that join together to form the Consortium of Independent Physician Associations (CIPA). CIPA is a statewide provider network that consists of 53 IPAs, physician hospital organizations (PHOs), health centers and group practices representing more than 2,000 physicians. CIPA provides these organizations access to pay-for-performance contracts and assists members in promoting patient-centered medicine, performance improvement and technology objectives. It allows IPAs and physicians to maintain independence, collaborate with local physicians and participate in the Blue Cross Blue Shield of Michigan Physician Group Incentive Program (PGIP). CIPA is one of the largest networks participating in the Blue Cross’ PGIP and is a contracting entity managed by Medical Advantage Group.

After Dr. Brown contacted MAFP and joined the Michigan Family Physicians Care, Inc. to become part of CIPA, CIPA introduced the Mancelona practice to the Medical Advantage Group, and there, the journey began.

For more information on Michigan Family Physicians Care, Inc. and how MAFP can assist your practice in becoming PCMH-designated, please visit www.mafp.com/about/michigan-family-physicians-care or contact the MAFP office toll-free at 800-833-5151 or 517-347-0098.