



WORKPLACE SUPPORT FOR CHRONIC DISEASE PREVENTION AND MANAGEMENT

The Problem

- The care of chronic illnesses is the dominant expense in health care today, absorbing 83% of every dollar spent on health care.
- Almost half of all Americans have a chronic disease, and 25% of these suffer some kind of limitation in their daily activities related to their disease(s). Americans receive evidence-based treatment for chronic illnesses only about 55% of the time (48% for diabetes).
- PPG Industries alone estimates that it could save \$16-30 million per year in lost time, productivity and direct medical cost if adequate prevention and treatment of diabetes were available to its working populations. The annual cost of lost productive work time among U.S. workers with depression is estimated at \$44 billion.
- An effective model of care is available which could more effectively address this growing problem, but it requires a fundamental redesign of our healthcare delivery system and reimbursement policies. Dr. Ed Wagner's widely accepted "Chronic Care Model" has six components:
 - Community Resources & Policies (i.e. healthy work and living environments)
 - Healthcare System Design (i.e. payment policies)
 - Delivery System Design (i.e. how physician offices and hospitals deliver care)
 - Clinical Information Systems (i.e. Electronic Medical Record systems)
 - Decision Support (evidence-based practice built into treatment plans)
 - Self-Management Support (empower patients to make good decisions about health)

The Wagner model is becoming a standard beacon for healthcare reform in regional coalitions around the country, and has been touted by Governor Rendell in his "Prescription for Pennsylvania" as a powerful tool for improving disease prevention and management. It is also increasingly guiding pay-for-performance measures in health insurance programs. Worksite wellness programs have a critical function in at least two of the model's components: "Community Resources" and "Self-Management Support" (bringing tools and health-enabling opportunities to the places where people with chronic diseases live and work).

Possible Purchaser Actions

- Enroll in the employer-funded "Living My Life" program, which trains traditionally under-utilized pharmacists to take a more active role in helping employees manage their diabetes (based on a successful pilot in Asheville, NC, and sponsored by the Pittsburgh Business Group on Health)
- Join the newly forming multi-stakeholder "Pittsburgh Alliance for Chronic Care Transformation" (PACCT) as a member organization working to support the Wagner Chronic Care Model in the following target areas: (1) Ambulatory Care Redesign, (2) Community-based Health Support System, and (3) Payment Reform.
- Collaborate with insurers on worksite wellness programs and disease management programs which might include employee wellness and prevention surveys, employee incentives for participation in weight loss, exercise or smoking cessation programs, etc.

Results to be Anticipated

- Happier, healthier workforce with fewer work days lost due to chronic illnesses
- Lower costs from avoided complications and hospitalizations
- Lower costs and higher quality care through population management and risk stratification of the workforce that focus health support resources where they are needed the most

For more information on workplace support for chronic disease prevention and management program contact Tania Lyon at 412-586-6709 or tlyon@prhi.org.
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