

# **The Transformation of Primary Care: All Teach All Learn in the Medical Home Learning Community**

The efforts of the Iowa Healthcare Collaborative (IHC) focus around four cornerstones of activity, one of which is to align and equip Iowa healthcare providers on quality and value, working toward the goal of exceptional healthcare in Iowa. IHC learning communities bring together healthcare professionals three times over the course of a year in an “all teach-all learn” environment, where topical curriculum is incorporated and best practices from across the state are shared.

Originally introduced in 1967 by the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP), the “medical home” is a model for delivering effective and efficient patient-centered care. Recently, the American Academy of Family Physicians, American College of Physicians, and the American Osteopathic Association have joined the AAP to refine the concept for all of primary care. The Patient-Centered Medical Home (PCMH) aims to equip physicians and their practice teams to deliver primary care which is “accessible, continuous, comprehensive, family-centered, coordinated, compassionate and culturally effective”. (AAP website)

In 2008, a joint initiative of the Iowa Healthcare Collaborative and the Iowa Academy of Family Physicians brought together physician leaders from across the state in a Medical Home Workgroup. Represented within the workgroup are Iowa’s major health systems, community health centers, large physician groups, and independent practices. This provider group is working together to share best practice and lessons learned in deploying the nationally recognized PCMH model. The workgroup also works to inform and collaborate with other healthcare stakeholders, including Wellmark, Iowa Medicaid Enterprise, and the State Medical Home Advisory Council.

To equip practices in becoming a PCMH, the workgroup developed the Medical Home Learning Community (MHLC), a three-session program which started in April and met again in June and September. This collaborative exercise brought practices from across the state together to focus on the transformation of primary care and to explore the standards for National Committee for Quality Assurance (NCQA) recognition of medical home status. Each learning session included presentations from a national keynote speaker and local experts on the deployment of the PCMH. Sessions throughout the day focused on specific areas of practice transformation that aligned with NCQA criteria.

Iowa physicians have shown high interest in the PCMH and believe this model of care is a means to improve clinical quality, patient safety, and value of the care delivered to the citizens of Iowa. By participating in the MHLC, participants have committed to the deployment of the PCMH culture and techniques within their practice.

## **SUCCESS SNAPSHOT**

One Step at a Time

### **McFarland Clinic**

Patient-centered care is quickly becoming the standard for primary care across the nation and is at the heart of the medical home concept. With the launch of this year's Medical Home Learning Community (MHLC), care delivery teams in clinics from across the state have gathered to learn more about medical home and to share stories and best practices.

McFarland Clinic in Carroll has participated in all three learning sessions this year. Dr. Skinner, medical director, was quick to sign up his team in order to gain a greater understanding about how to become a medical home and be able to learn from others in the process. "We are more confident of our ability to reach the goals of the National Committee for Quality Assurance (NCQA) guidelines for the Patient-Centered Medical Home (PCMH) since becoming a part of the MHLC," says Dr. Skinner.

As far as implementing changes within the practice, Dr. Skinner says that the clinic will focus on one standard of the guidelines at a time, and not try to do too much at once.

Dr. Skinner hopes that in the future, his practice will have team-based care that is patient-friendly and is accountable for patient outcomes, though this transformation must not be limited to the medical staff. "One of the most important questions will be how to engage the patient to be an active partner in their care," says Dr. Skinner.

Dr. Skinner commends the MHLC and the way in which it underscores the unique healthcare environment present in Iowa. "[The MHLC] again demonstrates why Iowa scores so highly in healthcare quality. We have engaged, quality healthcare groups of all sizes ready and willing to work together to improve the care of our patients and learn from each other."