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Patient Education and Improved Outcomes

Palladian Health, as part of its quality improvement, has undertaken an analysis of the education given by providers, both PTs and DCs to patients who present with spine pain, including neck pain, mid back pain and low back pain. This analysis was performed on both physical therapy and chiropractic providers for submissions received from 7/1/13 through 12/31/13.

Evidence based guidelines (EBG) strongly support the use of patient education concerning the diagnosis, prognosis and active home or self care. Patient’s who become actively engaged in the course of care have been shown to have improved clinical outcomes. The reinforcement of the educational process should be repeated throughout the course of care.

Patient education includes, but is not limited to: discussion of the diagnosis, the anticipated prognosis, instructions for remaining active, self care with home modalities such as ice or heat and recommendations or instruction for exercises. Exercises may be specific, such as performing piriformis stretches or general exercises such as walking for a period of time.

For the purposes of this Quality Improvement Project data was collected from the PT/DC Treatment forms. After excluding those patients under the age of 18, all submissions for each patient by provider were tabulated. The results indicated that DCs were completing patient education in 42% (fig. 1) of the cases, whereas PTs were doing so in 55% (fig. 2) of the cases.

Fig. 1 Percentage of chiropractic cases receiving patient education

Education for Spine Pain QIP (by # of requests)	
Total Number of requests with SPINE Region of Complaint (ROC) and member age > 18 and Education about (Diagnosis AND Prognosis AND Remaining Active Home/Self Care (Heat/Ice OR General Exercise OR Specific Exercise)	4732
Total Number of requests with SPINE ROC and member age > 18	11358
PERCENT COMPLETION	42%

Fig. 2 Percentage of physical therapy cases receiving patient education

Education for Spine Pain QIP (by # of requests)	
Total Number of requests with SPINE ROC and member age > 18 and Education about (Diagnosis AND Prognosis AND Remaining Active Home/Self Care (Heat/Ice OR General Exercise OR Specific Exercise)	4786
Total Number of requests with SPINE ROC and member age > 18	8732
PERCENT COMPLETION	55%

Providers should seek opportunities during the patient visit to reinforce and support patient education as part of each provider’s goal to improve patient outcomes. All patient education should be noted in both the patient chart and upon submission for continued care or discharge.

Quality Improvement

Patient Self Reported Pain Score and Provider Assessment of Severity Correlation

Palladian Health, as part of its quality improvement, has undertaken an analysis of the correlation of a patient’s self reported pain score, as an indicator of severity, and the correlation to the treating provider’s assessment of the patient’s symptom severity. This analysis was performed on both physical therapy and chiropractic providers for submissions received from 7/1/13 through 12/31/13. Only patients over the age of 18 with a spine or spinally related diagnosis were included in this Quality Improvement Project.

Evidence based guidelines (EBG) strongly support the use of patient outcomes as an indicator of a patient’s response to treatment. The patient self reported Numeric Rating Scale (NRS) has been validated as an effective method to assess the severity of a patient’s physical pain at four distinct points. Points of measurement include the average pain, pain at its worst severity, pain at its best or least severity and pain at the current moment. The NRS pain is scored on a 0 to 10 scale where 0 indicates no pain and a 10 indicates very severe pain.



Providers typically assess the severity of a patient’s symptoms on a 5 point scale using descriptors such as very mild, mild, moderate, severe and very severe.

For the purposes of this Quality Improvement Project the provider rating of the patient’s severity of symptoms was collected from the PT or DC Treatment Forms and the patient self reported pain score was collected from Patient Outcomes Form (SF-12). After excluding those patients under the age of 18, all submissions for each patient by provider were tabulated. Correlation of patient reported symptom severity and the provider assessment of the symptom severity was defined as met under the following conditions:

Fig. 1 Definition of correlation of patient NRS and provider assessment

Count IFF	Patient Outcomes Form					DC or PT Treatment Forms			
	NRS (average)	=	0	to	2	and	provider severity	=	very mild
	NRS (average)	=	3	or	4	and	provider severity	=	mild
	NRS (average)	=	5	or	6	and	provider severity	=	moderate
	NRS (average)	=	7	or	8	and	provider severity	=	severe
	NRS (average)	=	9	or	10	and	provider severity	=	very severe

The results indicated that within chiropractic submissions there was a 43% correlation in the reporting of symptom severity (fig. 2), whereas PTs were doing so in 46% (fig. 3) of the tabulated submissions.

Fig. 2 Percentage of chiropractic submissions with provider/patient symptom severity correlation

Patient Self Reported Pain Score and Provider (DC) Assessment of Severity (by # of requests)	
Total Number of requests with SPINE ROC and member age > 18 and patient/provider symptom severity rating correlate	4216
Total Number of requests with SPINE ROC and member age > 18	9788
PERCENT CORRELATION	43%

Fig. 3 Percentage of physical therapy submissions with provider/patient symptom severity correlation

Patient Self Reported Pain Score and Provider (PT) Assessment of Severity (by # of requests)	
Total Number of requests with SPINE ROC and member age > 18 and patient/provider symptom severity rating correlate	3478
Total Number of requests with SPINE ROC and member age > 18	7449
PERCENT CORRELATION	47%



Interventions

At the time of submission or re-evaluation, all providers should review both the patient reported symptom severity and the provider’s own assessment. Frequently, medical necessity determinations for continued care rely upon evidence of significant improvement. Cases in which the severity of the symptoms are either under reported or over reported frequently will not show consistent improvement which may result in a denial of care due to a lack of improvement.

Providers should discuss with their patients any disparities in numerical (1 – 10) pain rating and the descriptive assessment of the severity. The following chart should be used as a reference for such assessments.

Fig. 4 Numerical and descriptor equivalents

Numerical and Descriptor Correlation						
NRS (average)	=	0	to	2	=	very mild
NRS (average)	=	3	or	4	=	mild
NRS (average)	=	5	or	6	=	moderate
NRS (average)	=	7	or	8	=	severe
NRS (average)	=	9	or	10	=	very severe

Palladian Health 2014 Holidays	
Closed for Business	
Memorial Day	5/26/14
Independence Day	7/4/14
Labor Day	9/1/14
Thanksgiving and Day After	11/27-11/28/14
Christmas Eve and Christmas	12/24-12/25/14
New Year's Day	1/1/15
Non-Business Days*	
Columbus Day	10/13/14
Veterans Day	11/11/14

*Non-Business Days are described as public holidays not counted as one on which normal business transactions occur, however Palladian is open.

Members with the following Health Plans:	Palladian's Contact Numbers /Addresses					
	Customer Service Toll Free Phone Number	Customer Service Local Phone Number	UM Medical Necessity Review Fax Number	Grievance & Appeal Fax Number	Claims Billing	
TTY	1-877-495-2488	716-712-0414			Electronic Payor ID	Paper Submissions Palladian PO Box XXX Lancaster, NY 14086
Medical Services - DC, PT, OT, ST						
GHI	1-866-284-2901	716-712-2816	716-712-2817	716-809-8335	37268	HMO DC: PO Box 307
HIP	1-877-774-7693	716-712-2808	DC: 716-712-2802 PT/OT: 716-809-8324		37268	DC: PO Box 368 PT/OT: PO Box 270
QHP	1-877-785-0520	716-712-2827	716-809-8329		37268	PO Box 325
Univera	1-866-686-0674	716-712-2779	716-712-2755		37315	PO Box 350
Vytra	1-866-883-0643	716-712-2821	716-712-2803		37268	PO Box 368
Easy Choice Health Plan	1-888-658-8181	716-712-2823	n/a	n/a	37268	PO Box 325
Fitness Services						
Touchstone	1-888-777-8919	716-712-2828	n/a	n/a	TouchstoneBilling@palladianhealth.com	
Easy Choice Health Plan	1-888-658-8181	716-712-2823	n/a	n/a	EasyChoiceBilling@palladianhealth.com	