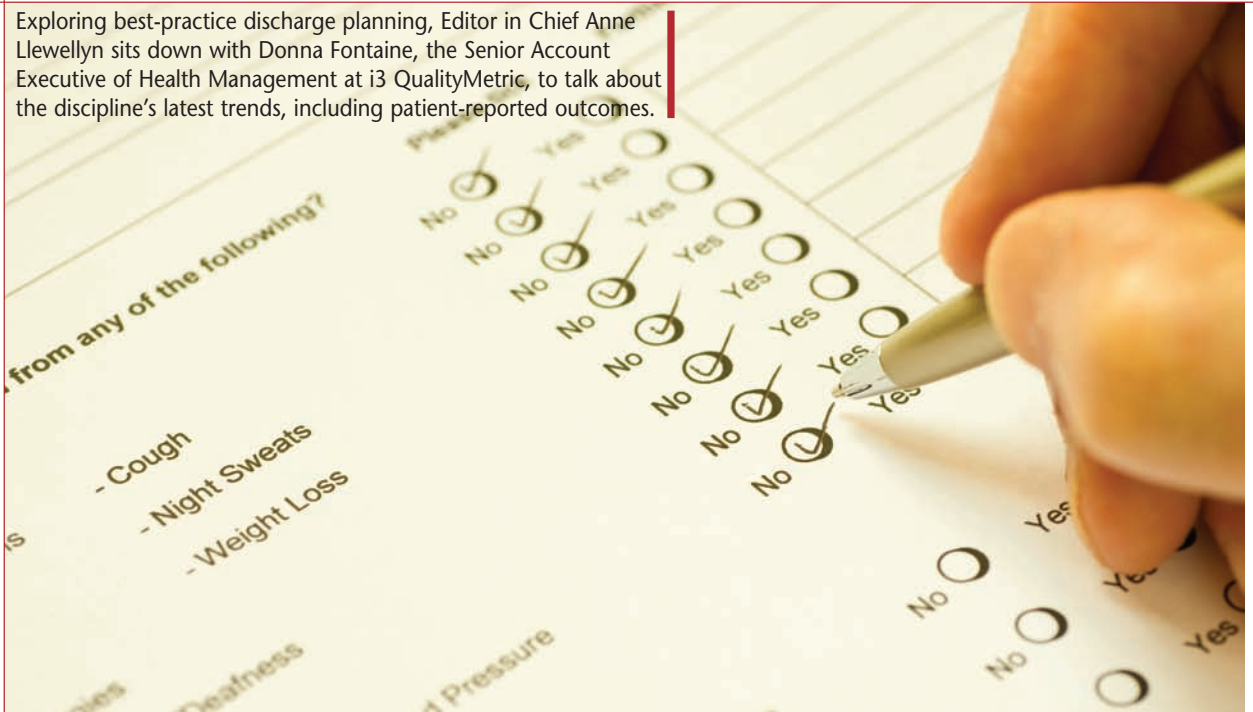


ASK THE EXPERT

Exploring best-practice discharge planning, Editor in Chief Anne Llewellyn sits down with Donna Fontaine, the Senior Account Executive of Health Management at i3 QualityMetric, to talk about the discipline's latest trends, including patient-reported outcomes.



Q

- AS A CASE MANAGER, HOW CAN I BEST MEASURE PROGRESS AND INFORM DISCHARGE PLANNING?
- CAN HEALTH SURVEYS HELP ME ACCOMPLISH THIS?

A

A growing number of case managers are now relying on scientifically valid health surveys—called patient-reported outcomes (PRO)—to measure a patient's progress and inform discharge planning. PROs can be used to enhance a case manager's understanding of treatment effectiveness and to engage patients in health promotion initiatives, encouraging them to adopt healthier lifestyles in order to improve overall functional health and well-being.

Ultimately, PROs allow a case manager to better understand a patient's health status, providing them with the ability to make more informed decisions regarding care.

HOW CAN I MORE ACTIVELY ENGAGE PATIENTS IN THE CASE MANAGEMENT PROCESS?

Perhaps one of the most valuable benefits of PROs is their ability to actively engage patients in the management of their own health care. PROs can help open a dialogue of communication among patients, health care professionals, and case managers that empowers patients to take ownership of their health.

Considering our hectic modern lives, it's not surprising that sometimes simple tasks, like completing a PRO at the proper time point, can be overlooked. Some PRO developers have established reminder systems that send automated email reminders to

patients to complete a health survey when required. Be sure to research whether your PRO offers this, because a real benefit to this type of system is the removal of some of the responsibility from the patient and case manager, helping to streamline the case management process.

CAN A PRO EASILY BE INCORPORATED INTO EVERYDAY CASE MANAGEMENT OPERATIONS?

Modern technology has redefined health care and made it easier than ever before to integrate PROs into any application being used for case management. Typically, PROs can be completed via paper/pencil, online, fax, PDA, and interactive voice response (IVR), among others. Having these tools available in so many ways allows a case manager

to select the method that will provide the least burden to a particular population. And with advanced technology, PROs can be easily accessible at your fingertips, making them a highly efficient and manageable addition to any case management program or service.

IS IT POSSIBLE FOR CASE MANAGERS TO UTILIZE A PRO IN RISK PREDICTION?

It is very common to use PROs in risk prediction. For many tools, there are linkages between PRO scores and variations in medical expenditures, work loss, depression risk, and utilization of health care services for illness. Using PROs for these purposes can help to more accurately quantify patient health care needs and develop effective care plans for those at the greatest risk of consuming health care dollars.

CAN A PRO HELP TO SCREEN PATIENTS FOR TREATMENT?

With PROs, it is possible to screen and stratify patients for treatment. In fact, many PROs have been shown to provide effective screening for detecting patients at risk for mental affective disorders, such as depression. In addition, normative and benchmark databases (from prior population-based studies) for many different diseases make it possible to stratify populations in terms of health risk, as defined by general physical and mental health status.

When PROs are used for these purposes, trends can be monitored over time, differences among population subgroups can be evaluated, and variations in health risk among these groups can be assessed. In turn, this information can be used to direct prevention efforts, funding and resources to where they are needed most.

WHAT ARE THE BENEFITS OF USING A PRO IN CASE MANAGEMENT PROCESSES?

In the world of case management, utilization and claims data is standard. But more often than not, there is no real data that measures a patient's self-perceived health or how they are actually feeling. In other words, patient care is being measured, but the voice of the patient is missing.

Increasingly, the patient's voice is becoming central to the evaluation of health care strategies aimed at improving health and minimizing the impact of disease. But a challenge for case managers is determining how to best capture and use this voice to create successful and cost-effective health care programs or services. Integrating PROs with predictive modeling tools—a combination of forces that can prove powerful in the measurement of performance or treatment effectiveness—can address this. True accountability in assessing patient health will ultimately come down to including the voice of the patient. **CTP**

An efficient and affordable option for people with neurologic impairments.



What sets Casa Colina's Transitional Living Center apart?

- ◆ Helps individuals further their rehabilitation goals in a 38-bed post-acute care setting
- ◆ Reduces or eliminates the need for long-term nursing care after neurological trauma
- ◆ Integrated approach to address physical, cognitive, social, and quality of life issues
- ◆ Multidisciplinary rehabilitation team led by board-certified physicians
- ◆ Up to six hours of therapy, six days a week
- ◆ 24-hour supervision and neurobehavioral programming
- ◆ Optional day treatment or home and community services
- ◆ Conveniently located on Casa Colina's 20-acre medical and rehabilitation campus with direct access to hospital-based inpatient and outpatient services, diagnostic imaging, sleep disorders and outpatient surgery centers, laboratory and pharmacy services, and much more



TLC clients typically have shorter lengths of stay with optimum outcomes when compared to similar facilities - at nearly half the cost!

- ◆ Generally much shorter lengths of stay with an average discharge rate of only 6 weeks (compared to 6 - 9 months at similar facilities) with same or better outcomes

To learn more or to refer a client to the TLC, please call toll-free 800/926-5462, ext. 4100.



CENTERS FOR REHABILITATION

255 East Bonita Avenue, Pomona, CA ◆ www.casacolina.org