

Two Best Practices for Cardiac Health Excellence Recognized in Celebration of USA Heart Month



Picture (from left to right): Beth Wehlitz, Beverly Jameson, Jason Guichard, Stephanie Flippin, Sandi Stoudenmire

February is American heart month, an opportunity to celebrate and focus on heart health. It is with pleasure that we consequently recognize two integrated clinical care teams who have and continue to make monumental efforts in improved patient outcomes for one of the deadliest diseases of our time: cardio-vascular disease.

At Medcan Health Management Inc in Ontario, Canada, an integrated care team has been focused on preventative cardiovascular care for the past 25 years, through their comprehensive annual health assessments (AHA). This assessment has previously included a stress

test, lipid analysis and Framingham risk score, however, stress testing was not possible during COVID-19. Thus, this AHA evolved with time and now includes high sensitivity cardi-ac troponin I (hs-cTnI) testing, in place of stress testing. This new approach enabled enhanced capabilities for identifying patients at future risk for cardiovascular disease, while also improving patient experiences. Clients undergoing the annual evaluation were saving 38 minutes relative to previous years, whereas physicians also maximized their time, freeing up 45 additional minutes per day due to associated AHA efficiencies. A reduction



Picture (from left to right): Peter Baxter, Neil Mahon, Shaun Francis, Yogini Walli, Peter Nord

in false positivity was also realized, saving \$284,000 CDN per year for Medcan and \$357,500 CDN for the Canadian healthcare System. To date, over 48 seemingly healthy individuals who underwent the AHA were identified as requiring urgent medical care, triggering a cascade of events that protecting each with life-saving measures.

Just south of the border, at Prisma Health Greenville Memorial Hospital in Greenville, South Carolina, a team led by Dr. Jason Guichard began revolutionizing their care delivery for patients with heart failure. Recognizing that the burden of heart failure is increasing, while also putting a strain on already taxed healthcare systems, this team sought to improve acute and post-acute patient management pathways to improve outcomes and reduce readmissions. This team focused on identifying patients with heart failure earlier to enable improved access to care and more efficient use of hospital resources. To achieve this, they used the electronic medical records and IT systems to identify patients at increased risk for hospitalization and decompensation, and subsequently enhanced their care coordination to improve their overall

outcomes. This change in patient identification and management enabled a 48% increase in the number of heart failure patients who were at high risk for decompensation to actively receiving care through an advanced heart failure specialist. Their efforts corresponded to a 12% improvement in mortality for all patients in their system, while also enabling a 67% improvement in heart failure clinic volume and subsequent 59% reduction in emergency and urgent care visits for patients with heart failure.

Both of these impressive integrated care teams utilized in-sights associated with laboratory medicine to provide proactive and preventative care to patients to enable improved patient outcomes, healthcare system efficiencies and saved healthcare dollars. For their efforts and outcomes, both were recognized by the 2021 UNIVANTS of Healthcare Excellence award program. Congratulations to both teams!

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