



May 2019

NRACC Exemplary Practice Profile: Family Physicians of Evans

About the Practice

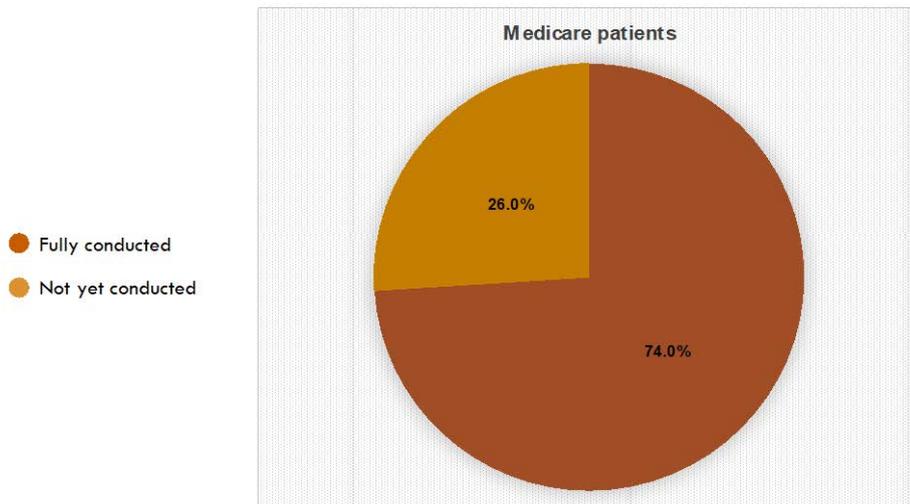
Family Physicians of Evans is a privately owned healthcare clinic in Evans, Georgia, that offers Annual Wellness Visits (AWVs), Chronic Care Management (CCM), and prescription drug monitoring, among other services. Our staff of six providers offers care to about 2,500 Medicare patients in Evans, an upscale suburb 11 miles from Augusta whose 45,000 residents are “traditional folks” that own small businesses.

The practice has always been responsive and dedicated to our patients, but we joined TCPI in June 2017 to take our service to the next level. We needed to give better training to our care coordinators and strengthen our tracking of quality measures to ensure we met Merit-based Incentive Payment System requirements. Most of all, we had to improve our interoperability and ensure our Electronic Health Records were up to date so our patients could connect to other practices and specialists when necessary.

The Transformation Process

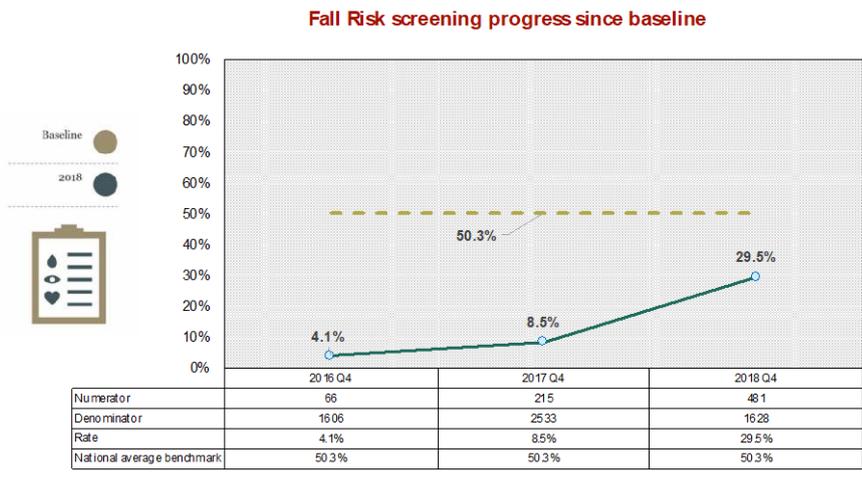
We successfully achieved progress on these aims by implementing a Plan-Do-Study-Act for both our AWV and CCM programs. We now offer AWVs (fully conducted through the Nurse-Led model) to 74 percent of our Medicare-eligible patients and enroll 10 patients per month in our new CCM program.

ANNUAL WELLNESS VISITS IN EVANS, GEORGIA



Many of the clinic’s quality measures have seen major progress, including a 28 percentage point improvement in Hemoglobin A1c Poor Control measures for patients with diabetes; a 26 percentage point increase in fall screening; a 17 percentage point increase in flu shots; a five percentage point increase in lower back pain screening; a five percentage point increase in pneumonia shots; a four percentage point increase in colorectal cancer screening, and four percentage point improvement in Controlling High Blood Pressure.

FAMILY PHYSICIANS OF EVANS



Our greatest success has been with chronically ill and high-risk patients, especially those with diabetes and hypertension. We now monitor these cases monthly through phone calls or in-person visits. This high level of oversight allows for consistent tracking of data, and better overall care for the patient.

We also vastly improved our opioid management protocol through TCPI training and webinars. All providers practice medication management through Prescription Drug Monitoring

Programs, and any patients who require opioid prescriptions must undergo drug testing. If the medication regimen lasts longer than three months, the patient is referred to pain management.

Providing Patient-centered Care

TCPI helped Family Physicians of Evans vastly expand our Patient Family Engagement program to include Patient Satisfaction Tablets, a Patient Family Advisory Council, a Patient Portal, and a new Advance Care Planning initiative for all of our Medicare patients.

The practice further increased clinical access by offering appointments on evenings and weekends, and by substituting non-physician labor such as nurses for consultations that didn't require doctors.

We also started using an intake form that asked about resource deficiencies and issues regarding finance, transportation, or food. Any patients who answered “yes” received a list of community resources like food pantries that they could follow up with.

Another important way TCPI helped us was by setting up a direct email address to securely send patient data from EHRs back and forth between providers and hospitals. This information was previously sent via fax, so our workflow is now much more automated. TCPI offered special online training to our care coordinators and population health nurses during this process.

As a result, our partnerships with local hospitals have vastly improved because we can now track patients with ease. We have collaborative care agreements with these institutions so we can stay in touch about emergency room visits and transitional care management.

To avoid readmissions, we also offer an answering service with a provider on call 24/7 who helps patients diagnose ailments and hopefully avoid extra hospital bills.

Cost and Benefit Savings

The biggest benefit of TCPI was the substantial \$230,000 cost savings we achieved through improved health outcomes by focusing on Controlling High Blood Pressure (\$29,742) and Hemoglobin A1c Poor Control (\$200,359). We accomplished this reduction through better training of our population health nurses and care coordinators, along with the aforementioned hospital collaborative care agreements.

We even helped our patients save money through a new program called Navicure that makes it easier to pay medical bills. Patients authorize payments up to a certain amount (\$250 for most office visits) and once the insurance company notifies our office of the actual charge, we send a notification email before charging the patient's credit card. If patients owe more than the authorized amount, they can set up a payment plan on the remaining balance. If they owe less, we only charge their card for the smaller amount.

The NRACC's assistance also enabled us to give more benefits to our staff. Family Physicians of Evans would be nothing without our employees, so we ensure their satisfaction through surveys and give them strategies for joy in the workplace.

Our engagement throughout the entire TCPI process was so strong that we're now part of the Accountable Care Organization Aledade, ensuring we maintain our high performance.