Innovation Report

Washington Association for Community Health

ICHS International Community HEALTH SERVICES

Redefining Primary Care: A Geriatric-Centered Approach

International Community Health Services (ICHS) believes geriatric care is necessary as people age and should be tailored around the 5 M's framework - mind, mobility, medication, multicomplexity and what matters most to the patient. Because access to specialists is often limited for resource poor or non-English speaking patients, these services need to be integrated into primary care. ICHS's goal is to come up with a care plan, minimize care utilization rates, help primary care providers feel more confident and get support for the patients with the most complex needs.



Development of a Geriatric Assessment Model

Dr. Eunice Furies wanted to replicate Swedish First Hill Family Medicine Clinic's geriatric assessment model in which fellows oversee the care of referred geriatric patients, both from within the clinic and from external organizations.

Comprehensive assessments are conducted to understand each patient's health status, values, and priorities, with evaluations of memory, balance, and mood depending on issues they are experiencing. For patients unable to come into the clinic for assessment, home visits are offered. Following evaluation, the geriatrician develops a patient-centered treatment plan for the primary care physician that reflects the individual's goals and may include referrals to behavioral health services and pharmacy support. The geriatrician also assists in periodic follow up care for dementia.

Patient-Centered Solutions to Meet the Needs of Geriatric Care

ICHS's geriatric clinic leverages available resources to meet the specific needs of their patients. ICHS focuses on dementia care and cognitive care, has a team lead, offers extra training for providers, and creates sufficient time during visits to do assessments instead of people waiting for specialist care.

To learn more about ICHS's geriatric care model, read the full report.

Key lessons learned highlight the importance of tailoring services to what is currently available. The long-term goal is to expand the clinic's capacity to provide more comprehensive geriatric assessments, offering patients a set of recommendations and ensuring stronger support for successful primary care follow-up.

Over time, the geriatric clinic has continued to evolve and has proven to be a significant success for ICHS. Primary care providers are receiving the support and training needed to feel more confident and get advice on serving patients with complex needs.

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