PUTTING A TEAM TO WORK ON YOUR HEALTHCARE p. 4

RX Refill Danger: PREVENTING PAINKILLER ABUSE p. 3

Weight Loss YOU HAVE OPTIONS p. 7
After this difficult winter, approaching spring with a healthier outlook and an acceptance of change can feel refreshing.

This issue of Peak of Health helps you explore new possibilities for the health of you and your loved ones. We cover several new PinnacleHealth processes and tools, including our patient portal, MyPinnacleHealth, which aims to make healthcare more convenient and strengthen your relationship with your healthcare team.

In addition, we encourage you to consider new ways of thinking about health risks. In this issue we talk about our new patient safety measures around prescribing narcotics and the importance of recognizing colon cancer in young people.

I hope these and other articles offer inspiration to discover better health in this season of renewal and fresh perspectives.

Yours in good health,

Michael A. Young
President & CEO, PinnacleHealth

Colorectal cancer—tumors in the colon or rectum—is on the rise, especially in young people. Brush up on the latest info:

- Colorectal cancer affects about one in 21 men and roughly one in 23 women.
- A 2014 JAMA surgery study found that incidences of colorectal cancer in people ages 20 to 49 have increased and will continue to do so. By 2030:
  - Colon cancer will increase by 90 percent, and rectal cancer by more than 124 percent among people ages 20 to 34.
  - Colon cancer will increase by almost 28 percent, and rectal cancer by more than 45 percent among people ages 35 to 49.
- Colonoscopies are one of the best preventive tools against colorectal cancer. However, as of 2012, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention states nearly 30 percent of U.S. adults had never been screened.
THE TRUST EFFECT

Open communication between patient and provider is a cornerstone of medication safety, particularly in preventing opioid abuse.

“Having a strong, trusting relationship allows the provider to gather information needed to provide proper patient care,” says Megan Cancilla, PharmD, clinical pharmacist at PinnacleHealth Medical Group. “Patients who are taking opioids, for example, should feel comfortable talking to their provider about how often they are taking their opioid pain medication and why they may be taking more than prescribed. Without a solid patient-provider relationship, patients may not be willing to speak up, forfeiting the opportunity to get the help they truly need.”

PinnacleHealth Medical Group (PHMG) is making medical care safer by addressing two sources of potential harm to patients—prescription refills and opioid abuse.

ELECTRONIC COMMUNICATION WITH PHARMACIES

UNDERSTANDING YOUR PRESCRIPTIONS can be complicated, especially for seniors, who may take multiple medications and struggle to keep track of them. PHMG providers and community pharmacies are enhancing communication by relying predominantly on electronic prescribing for refill requests. Pharmacies are able to send automated reminders to patients when a refill of their medication is needed. The pharmacy can then send a refill request electronically to the provider, reducing errors in medication choice, dosing or direction.

“This allows patients to contact their pharmacy directly for a prescription refill instead of calling their provider’s office,” says Megan Cancilla, PharmD, clinical pharmacist at PHMG. “Through the pharmacy, the patient can request a refill around the clock either in person, online or by phone. The pharmacy then sends the request electronically to the PHMG provider to be approved. This workflow reduces the potential for human error and ensures the safety of the patient. It also allows the provider to spend more time with patients while they are in the office and less time attending to telephoned refill requests.”

TAKING A STAND AGAINST PRESCRIPTION PAINKILLER MISUSE

Prescription painkiller (opioid) overdoses claim 44 lives in the United States every day, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Such overdoses top the list of deadliest injuries for Pennsylvanians, even surpassing car accidents, according to the state medical society. PHMG is taking steps to help halt the opioid abuse epidemic, including:

- Conducting drug screenings during patient appointments
- Educating providers about alternatives to opioids
- Performing pill counts during appointments to ensure patients are taking drugs as prescribed
- Permitting only patients with photo identification to pick up prescriptions in the office
- Requiring patients to sign a controlled substance agreement, when needed, to take an opioid for more than 30 days
- If the risk of taking a narcotic outweighs its benefits or addiction potential is high, PHMG providers will create a tapering schedule to wean the patient from the drug with little or no discomfort

Need a physician for you or your family? Find one at pinnaclehealth.org.

OPIOIDS ARE MEDICATIONS THAT RELIEVE PAIN. THEY REDUCE THE INTENSITY OF PAIN SIGNALS REACHING THE BRAIN AND AFFECT THOSE BRAIN AREAS CONTROLLING EMOTION, WHICH DIMINISHES THE EFFECTS OF A PAINFUL STIMULUS. MEDICATIONS THAT FALL WITHIN THIS CLASS INCLUDE HYDROCODONE (E.G., VICODIN), OXYCODONE (E.G., OXYCONTIN, PERCOCET), MORPHINE (E.G., KADIAN, AVINZA), CODEINE, AND RELATED DRUGS.
In the modern medical marketplace, mid-level healthcare providers are increasingly abundant, adding value for patients and physicians alike.

“Access has always been a tremendous issue for those of us who work in primary care, one of the most demanding areas in medicine in terms of time,” says Robert Nielsen, MD, medical director of PinnacleHealth Medical Group. “Patients who do not have good access may end up in the emergency room.”

According to Dr. Nielsen, having many qualified hands on deck is critical to delivering care as soon as possible and ensuring positive outcomes in the long run.
ADVANCING THE EXPERIENCE OF SPECIALIZED SERVICE

With the assistance of mid-level providers, physicians working in specialized fields of medicine have more time to devote to a robust roster of patients and the research needed to provide the highest quality of care. Mid-levels who are certified registered nurse practitioners or physician assistants may serve in a variety of roles.

“There’s so much we have to get done in a day. I may have 20 echocardiograms to read, a dozen Holter monitors and a dozen stress tests in addition to seeing the patients,” says Bryan Herchelroath, DO, FACC, cardiologist with PinnacleHealth CardioVascular Institute. “Our mid-level providers are very helpful when I am working on several different things. They practice as a direct extension of physicians and focus exclusively on patient care, allowing me to do other studies and keep things moving.”

In addition to enhancing efficiency, Dr. Herchelroath notes the complementary care that mid-levels provide often helps him and other physicians get a comprehensive picture of each patient’s needs and the best ways to approach treatment.

“So often in medicine, you get the most valuable data from the patients themselves. Mid-level providers are adept at getting patients’ stories and understanding what is going on so we can figure out what is happening. Through collaboration, we can get the most accurate answers.”

Lisa K. Torp, MD, medical director of the PinnacleHealth Breast Care Center, notes that CRNPs on staff with her practice perform a variety of roles.

Looking for a primary care physician? Visit pinnaclehealth.org, choose “Locations & Providers” and select the “Find a Provider” link.
In April, PinnacleHealth’s outpatient sites and physicians’ offices implemented Epic, a single computer system that manages appointment scheduling, clinic registration, insurance, billing and each patient’s electronic medical record (EMR). Our hospitals will follow and implement Epic in October.

THE NEW SYSTEM benefits our patients in several ways, including:
- A new patient portal, MyPinnacleHealth
- A 24/7 nurse advice hotline
- Improved communication among caregivers
- Faster access to information
- Easier and more efficient scheduling

BENEFITS OF MYPINNACLEHEALTH:
MyPinnacleHealth is a powerful tool for enhancing communication between patients and physicians and connecting patients to their care. With this free service, patients have personalized and secure access to portions of their medical record.

- Whether at work, on the road or at home, MyPinnacleHealth helps our patients securely manage and receive information about their health.
- MyPinnacleHealth can be used to:
  - Request or change appointments
  - Safely email the patient’s physician
  - View lab results
  - Request prescription refills
  - View medical records

MyPinnacleHealth is easy to use and can be accessed anytime from a computer and Internet browser. A MyPinnacleHealth App (for Android and iPhone) is also available to help patients manage their health on a smartphone.

Patients can sign up for MyPinnacleHealth using an activation code provided at their next office visit or through the self-registration process at mypinnaclehealth.org.

We are very excited that our investment in Epic will allow us to offer even more comprehensive care to our patients and improve access to information for both our providers and patients.
A PERSON IS AFFECTED by severe obesity when their body mass index (BMI) is greater than 40 or their BMI is 35 or higher and accompanied by medical conditions such as high blood pressure, diabetes and sleep apnea.

At The Weight Loss Center at PinnacleHealth, patients are first encouraged to pursue treatment in a nonsurgical program that integrates exercise with changes to diet and lifestyle.

“We’re one of the only surgical centers in the country that tries to help patients achieve their weight loss without surgery first,” says Luciano DiMarco, DO, FACOS, bariatric surgeon, with Central Pennsylvania Surgical Associates, LTD. “For instance, we connect patients with the support of a dietitian and emphasize nonsurgical options.”

If surgery is the right option, it is an effective tool for long-term weight loss and improved health.

“Bariatric surgery has been shown to help improve or resolve many obesity-related conditions, such as type 2 diabetes, high blood pressure, heart disease, and more,” says Dr. DiMarco. “One way to assess success is the feedback from our patients—how they feel and what they regain after surgery. It’s amazing to see patients who could not get around and had a difficult time functioning before surgery walk into the office six months after surgery full of energy.”

Bariatric surgery candidates must be at least 18 years old and complete a comprehensive evaluation, including a psychological screening, with a variety of healthcare professionals to ensure they are physically and emotionally prepared for the procedure and the lifestyle changes that accompany it.

“Bariatric surgery is a lifelong commitment. After surgery, patients must commit to regular follow-up visits for the first year, and then annually thereafter,” Dr. DiMarco says. “If a patient requires more care, visits can be more frequent.”

The Weight Loss Center’s surgeons are some of the most experienced in the state and have completed more than 5,500 successful bariatric procedures since 1998. They are skilled in the most advanced surgical options for weight loss and specialize in minimally invasive options that offer faster healing and better results.

Patients who wish to learn more about our surgeons and their weight-loss options are invited to attend an information session. Sessions are offered several times a week at The Weight Loss Center, an updated and patient-friendly facility with free and ample parking, located at 4315 Londonderry Road, Harrisburg.

Register for the information session by calling (717) 909-0290.
But there are children in our community whose suffering we cannot see—because they carry the pain of mental health issues on the inside.

Sadly, the number of children with these burdens continues to increase.

To donate, please use the enclosed envelope, contact the PinnacleHealth Foundation at (717) 231-8080 or visit pinnaclehealth.org/giving-back.

We need more space. We need your help.

To help more families and children who need us, we plan to renovate space on the Polyclinic campus. Our ambitious capital campaign, Space to Grow, Room to Heal, will allow the Pennsylvania Psychiatric Institute (PPI) and PinnacleHealth to make improvements and expand our facilities to help children ages 4 – 12, including the addition of private rooms and therapeutic activities.

But without your investment, the additional space won’t happen.

Please consider supporting Space to Grow, Room to Heal so that more children who need our care can move beyond their pain — to feelings and memories worth keeping.