



Newsletter Second Quarter 2003

NovaHealth is an Independent Practice Association established to ensure that participating providers have the economic freedom to focus on improving their patients' health status and to partner with patients to manage care.

QUALITY INITIATIVES

Diabetes Update

Nova has taken an exciting step in treating patients with diabetes by adopting several approaches that have proven to be successful in medical practices across the country.



Our initiative, called "Touch every life," is designed to increase patient involvement in their own care, empowering them to participate in the day-to-day management of their disease.

The goal of this program is to improve the overall health of patients with diabetes and to increase their life expectancy. We are increasing the value of the healthcare patients receive, and at the same time chipping away at the high cost of treating the complications commonly associated with diabetes.

Dr. William Ervin, Chair of the Diabetes Task Force, presented an overview of this project at the May 14 Nova Quality Update Dinner Meeting. The new program is divided into two approaches: one focused on standardizing strategies of care for physicians and clinical staff members, the other directed towards

inspiring patients to take firm control of their health.

"We want every patient to have regular and evidence-based care along with frequent contact and encouragement to follow the exercise, dietary, and medical treatment regimens that are particularly critical to patients with diabetes," said Dr. Ervin.



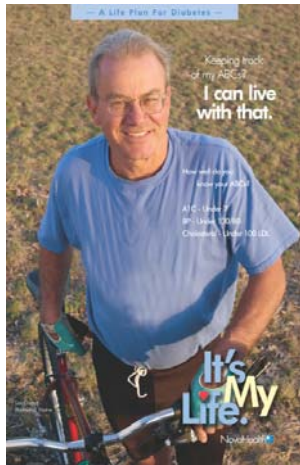
The patient side of the program is known as "It's My Life," reminding everyone involved that 99% of all decisions that affect diabetes outcomes are made by the patients themselves. Through posters, brochures, personal calendars, and personal contact with physicians and staff, patients are repeatedly encouraged to know the "ABCs" of diabetes. "These are the three critical factors for patients with diabetes to track closely," noted Dr. Michael Albaum, Medical Director of NovaHealth and PrimeCare.



"A or actually A1C is the abbreviation for a measurement of blood sugar control over several months. The B and C in the equation relate to blood pressure and cholesterol — two critical factors in preventing heart

disease. Although cardiac disease is the most life threatening complication, other complications of diabetes include loss of eyesight, kidney failure, and vascular and nerve damage leading to amputation. For many patients, making lifestyle changes and managing the ABCs closely can decrease these risks”.

If this poster is not yet in your office, please let us know:



Another aspect of the patient program is the creation of a network-wide database of people with diabetes, which will make it possible for us to track every patient’s health history and to be comprehensive in encouraging healthy behavior. This diabetes registry will also provide a benchmark against which to measure the success of the program.

The diabetes program is the most recent initiative in a series of similar efforts to improve the delivery of care for patients with conditions such as acute back pain and heart disease. Each of these efforts is intended to support the goals crafted earlier by NovaHealth physicians:

- to improve care processes in order to improve quality;
- improve the level of patient satisfaction and loyalty;

- enhance the healthcare value in an economically viable manner, and
- to raise the level of provider satisfaction.

Reminder: if you haven’t yet visited the **EBMsolutions** site, check it out at www.myebm.com ...



Call Nova if you need help accessing the site or registering your user name and password.

NETWORK UPDATE

Dr. Laurie Donaldson will be joining InterMed at the Stroudwater Crossing location in September. Dr. Donaldson graduated from the University of Missouri – Columbia School of Medicine in 1999. She completed her residency in Atlanta, Georgia at the Emory University Department of Pediatrics Residency Program and went on to do a Primary Care Sports Medicine Fellowship at Maine Medical Center which she has just completed. She has already joined the LBP Task Force and is working with Nova to help measure compliance with the guideline and to identify opportunities to improve care.

Dr. Steven Horowitz has recently joined Dr. Jeffrey Fecko and the rest of the PrimeCare Neurology team, and is another recent addition to the Nova Low Back Pain Task Force. Dr. Horowitz received his undergraduate degree from Bucknell University and went on to medical school at New York Medical College. He completed his internship at Kings County Hospital Center, his residency at Mt. Sinai Hospital in New York, and his fellowship at

Rigshospitalit, University of Copenhagen, Denmark. Before moving to Maine, Dr. Horowitz lived in Missouri, where he was Chief of Neurology at the University of Missouri School of Medicine. His interest in evidence based medicine and process improvement will be of great value to the Task Force.

PAYER UPDATE

Anthem News

Our current relationship with Anthem includes various contract provisions designed to invest in improvement and reward provider quality. We successfully met the first year performance targets relative to the low back pain, cardiac and diabetes initiatives and therefore, will continue to receive administrative support for these on going initiatives.

In addition, we performed favorably under a provision of the agreement that compares particular trends against a peer comparator group. The result of our favorable performance is an increase in our conversion factor (above market) effective July 1, 2003.

ADMINISTRATIVE ISSUES

Credentialing News

Cigna and Anthem have announced an upcoming change in their credentialing processes. Both plans have partnered with the Council for Affordable Quality Healthcare (CAQH) in an attempt to reduce many of the administrative burdens associated with the credentialing and recredentialing processes.

“Using the CAQH system, each provider [or credentialing coordinator] will submit a single application to one central database to meet the needs of all of the health plans and networks participating in the CAQH effort. Providers may easily update their information online or via fax anytime, and will confirm once each quarter that the data on file is complete and accurate.” After June 20, 2003, providers will begin receiving welcome packets from CAQH. The packets should be forwarded to your site coordinator or the credentialing coordinator for your group. Aetna is expected to follow suit – details to follow.

Harvard Pilgrim

Harvard has announced that beginning August 4, 2003 they will be adding the following services to the Authorization / Notification portion of HPHConnect:

- Physical, Occupational and Speech Therapy
- Durable Medical Equipment
- Home Health Care (home infusion is slated for the Fall)
- Infertility Providers
- Cardiac and Pulmonary Rehabilitation

Welcome to NovaHealth

Wanda Johnson joined Nova this spring as our Administrative Assistant. She brings with her extensive experience in the healthcare field and has already proven herself to be an invaluable addition to the team.

Erinn Crane has also joined us as a summer intern. She is currently on vacation from Wellesley College. Erinn will be coordinating the CDEMS Diabetes Registry Project and providing training on EBMsolutions.