“Palliative Services via Telehealth Means – Effective in Rural Communities”
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Publication info

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The Challenge

- Rural mountainous environment
  - One each - NP, RN, LCSW for 3000 sq. miles
- Provider shortage - all specialties
- Major Hospitals are 2 hrs in all directions
- High utilization of ER and Urgent Care
- Lack of community resources
- Limited technology in this environment
Efficiency Issues

- Phone calls, voice mail, email, faxes
- Travel times often > 2 hours
- Response times lead to delayed treatment
- Response times lead to delays in DME

Net Result:
- Patient feel that they are not heard
- Caregivers feel unsupported
- ER and Urgent Care visits increase

Sound Familiar?

It's Friday afternoon and you have messages......

- Mildred's PCG calls to report s/s of UTI
- Billy Packaday, reports COPD exac.
- Xena reports she's out of lisinopril, wants refill
- Pain meds for two patients couldn't be filled because we forgot to renew the NCTracks PA
- Primary Care - closed at noon

**Reactive vs Proactive with TapCloud**

Western Model - Goals

- Messages/Symptom changes come directly to the care team, via TapCloud secure messaging.
- Response times need to be within minutes.
- Phone calls and VM must be reduced.

- Patients and Caregivers learn that their care team is literally a message away.
- Patients and Caregivers feel more in control and experience less anxiety about their care.
Patient information and brief history:

- 87 yo female patient with daughter as Primary Caregiver.
- Patient has been in Palliative care for 16 months.
- Last visit in home was 5 weeks ago.
- Sustained a fall with subsequent hip repair
How “Tele” is used

Allows us to address:

• New medical concerns detected before crisis
• Psychosocial support - anxiety/depression
• Scheduling – Home visits are scheduled with TapCloud rather than phone calls
• Medication refills and reminders are planned
• Patient symptoms are monitored through check-in process

Population Dashboard

Clinical Dashboard
Clinical Dashboard

Benefits of “Tele”

Patient
- Receives timely response from clinical team
- Receives written instructions from clinical team

Clinical Team
- More efficient by saving time...10 minute conversation reduced to 6 sentences
- Communication captured and remains visible to team members
- Alert paging is available when you want it

Study Results

The Population
- 101 Palliative Patients with serious illness were tracked for a full year
- TapCloud was introduced by a clinician during in-person encounter
- 34% of patients are older than 80
- 11% of patients are over the age of 90
Study Results

TapCloud Usage
• Palliative patients use TapCloud frequently
• 4200+ discrete pieces of pertinent clinical information made available to clinicians
• Over a 12 month period, TapCloud alerts led to clinical interventions an average of 21 times per patient. Total contacts = 3400+

Study Results

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Symptom</th>
<th>% with Improvement</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pain</td>
<td>82%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dyspnea</td>
<td>78%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Constipation</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Depression</td>
<td>90%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wellbeing</td>
<td>79%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Study Results

Qualitative Results

Patients
Access to a clinician is fast, simple, and guaranteed.
• TapCloud, “guarantees that they’re going to get the message.” (Patient). This was contrasted with the less direct process of leaving messages at a doctor’s office or clinic.
• Fast: “If you send a message, they’re right on top of it. If I send it and it goes through, they’re on it.” (Caregiver)
Study Results

Patients (continued)

Being a palliative patient is easier, and the entire experience is more comforting.

• Medication refills simplified. Patients and caregivers were particularly enthusiastic about how easy medication refills are with TapCloud.
  — “The patient gets her medication a lot quicker. We’re not worrying about how to get her medication.” (Caregiver).
  — “Before, medication refills were a constant conversation, but now it’s not an issue...it’s alleviated stress between my loved one and I. Everything being on record and her knowing.” (Caregiver)

Study Results

Patients (continued)

• Symptoms are communicated without the cost, time, or stress. Direct, efficient access to care team members helped caregivers communicate potential problems earlier.
  — “TapCloud is a great alternative for [the patient], to have someone to come in to see her quick and keep her from having to go to the urgent care or to the hospital. To know that that service is there, is great for me.” (Caregiver)

Study Results

Patient (continued)

• Increased comfort. More than simply reducing stress and wasted time, TapCloud also gave patients and caregivers a deep sense of comfort, knowing a qualified care team was monitoring their status.
  — “The patient has got a lot more confidence, and she knows if she is sick she doesn’t have to wait on an appointment with somebody. She’s got somebody who’s gonna take care of her.” (Caregiver)
Study Results

Clinicians

• Increased efficiency and streamlined processes enable expanded caseload

• Easy to monitor many patients at one time

• Provide more timely interventions with the right resource

“The Carolinas Center

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