INNOVATIONS IN PRIMARY CARE

Fulfilling a Need: A Residency-Based Program to Preserve a Suboxone Treatment Program in a Rural Community

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THE INNOVATION

To respond to an urgent community and educational need, we rapidly created a medication-assisted treatment program for opioid use disorder within our family medicine residency practice. We did this by transitioning a large group of established patients from a single family physician (G.K.) who was departing the community to obtain further training.

WHO & WHERE

Mayo Clinic Family Medicine Residency-Eau Claire is located in a town of 70,000 people and also serves numerous smaller surrounding communities in rural Wisconsin. The departing provider was practicing with the same health system in the same community. The 2 practices share 1 electronic health record.

HOW

As with many rural communities, patient access to addiction medicine services, including Suboxone, is extremely limited in our area. Transitioning these patients into multiple practices was likely to be difficult and would increase the risk of interruption of their treatment and relapse. The project developed because of resident and faculty interest in fulfilling an urgent community need. Our primary goals were to quickly initiate a medication-assisted treatment program, preserve clinician satisfaction, and enhance resident addiction medicine education.

LEARNING

Patients and their original physician avoided the challenges of identifying other clinicians and possibly being unable to access care. We feel this significantly decreased the risk of relapse with its associated costs to the individuals and community. Our residency program engaged the community and found opportunities to move beyond the constraints of usual residency practice to implement this addiction service project. We found in the process that doing so can have numerous benefits for patient care, community health, and clinician education and satisfaction.

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Key words: medication assisted treatment; opioid use disorder; buprenorphine/naloxone; Suboxone; family medicine residency; rural health care

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