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PUTTING PATIENTS AT THE CENTER OF PRESCRIBING

IHI collaborating with a Pfizer global initiative to test better ways to monitor and support patients in primary care who are taking prescription medications

Boston, MA — December 17, 2018 — Each year in the US, more than 700,000 emergency department visits and 100,000 hospitalizations result from adverse drug events, [studies show](#), making medication safety one of the most pressing challenges in health care.

To better understand the causes of harm from medication and develop potential solutions, the [Institute for Healthcare Improvement](#) (IHI), a leader in health and health care improvement worldwide, is leading a project in which clinical teams will test methods to improve and work through with patients the myriad of problems that may arise when medications are prescribed. This Learning and Action Network is an initiative of the Pfizer Global Medical Grants Medication Optimization Learning and Change Project.

“Medication prescribing, delivery, and administration are among the most complex issues in health care,” says **Frank Federico, RPh**, IHI Vice President and Senior Safety Expert. “In many cases, the process is not focused enough on hurdles that patients face and their personal preferences about medication. The goal of this project is to work with a small group of clinical teams to rapidly test new ways of supporting patients with health problems to ensure a safe, effective, and co-developed treatment plan.”

Approximately one-third of US adults take five or more medications, but research suggests that fewer than half of patients take their medicine as prescribed, and as many as one-third of prescriptions go unfilled. The reasons for this range from affordability and logistical barriers to personal beliefs and preferences. The result can mean illness going untreated or a patient taking unnecessary or unwanted medication.

IHI will use an approach in this project known as “medication optimization,” which focuses on all aspects of the patient’s journey — from initiation of treatment or a decision to forego treatment, to follow-up, ongoing review of medications, and support of the medication treatment plan. The prototypes being tested will emphasize understanding what matters to the patient; sharing the decision making around medications; applying clinical and pharmaceutical expertise to ensure only needed medications are prescribed; being open to therapies other than medication when appropriate; and focusing on cost and availability of medications.

Over a 12-month period, the teams will meet in person and in virtual conferences to collaborate, share results, and receive coaching from IHI expert faculty and improvement advisors. IHI will oversee each organization’s project and provide overall project management.

(more)

Seven health care organizations have been selected to participate:

- Advocate Charitable Foundation (Advocate Aurora Health, Wisconsin)
- Heartland International Health Center (Illinois)
- Larkin University College of Pharmacy (Florida)
- NorthShore University Health System (Illinois)
- UNT Health Science Center (Texas)
- Vanderbilt University Medical Center (Tennessee)
- Washington State University (Washington)

“Through this grant, Pfizer seeks to help expand the health care professionals’ knowledge of one of the most vexing gaps in patient care,” said **Maureen Doyle-Scharff**, Team Lead, Global Medical Grants at Pfizer. “We are pleased to have IHI leading this effort and we look forward to seeing the results over time from this very committed group of clinical teams.”

The Learning and Action Network gets under way this month. Overall results of the project will be reported in December 2019.

To learn more about IHI’s work in medication and patient safety, visit ihi.org/patientsafety.

About the Institute for Healthcare Improvement (IHI)

The Institute for Healthcare Improvement (IHI) is an independent not-for-profit organization based in Boston, Massachusetts, USA. For more than 25 years, IHI has used improvement science to advance and sustain better outcomes in health and health systems across the world. IHI brings awareness of safety and quality to millions, catalyzes learning and the systematic improvement of care, develops solutions to previously intractable challenges, and mobilizes health systems, communities, regions, and nations to reduce harm and deaths. IHI collaborates with a growing community to spark bold, inventive ways to improve the health of individuals and populations. IHI generates optimism, harvests fresh ideas, and supports anyone, anywhere who wants to profoundly change health and health care for the better. Learn more at ihi.org.

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