

Managed Care Report

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Four Tips For Launching A Medicaid DM Program

• **Find the patients.** Because these patients can be difficult to locate, you'll need to spend extra time tracking them down, says **Dr. Sandeep Wadhwa**, vice president of medical management services at **McKesson Corp.**, which provides DM to Medicaid managed care plans. A lot of the patient data McKesson receives from clients is "pretty poor" as far as addresses and phone numbers are concerned, so McKesson performs rigorous data enhancement, cross-referencing the data with real-time phone directories. McKesson also identifies high-risk people and reaches out to them with nurses on the ground, as opposed to just calling them on the phone, Wadhwa says.

Airlogix, which provides respiratory DM services to Medicaid plans, is also accustomed to receiving patient data with 50-percent accuracy or below, explains **Susan Riley**, president and CEO. For this reason, anyone attempting Medicaid DM "needs to have a skill set of people who do nothing except locate phone numbers and correct addresses," she says. "People who do absolutely nothing except find the patients."

Leave no stone unturned. When Airlogix is trying to track down high-risk individuals, they'll go to the patient's physician or even try to track the patients down via the school system. "You have to be willing to do whatever it takes to find them," Riley says.

• **Teach patients how to use the health system.** Unlike commercial DM, where you're working with patients who are more familiar with their physician and the way the health system works, Medicaid DM programs need to understand that the health system is often a mystery to Medicaid recipients, explains **Dr. Gregory Preston**, senior vice president of medical affairs and chief medical officer for **AmeriHealth Mercy Health Plan**.

DM in Medicaid involves teaching people to plan ahead so they don't use the ER as their only source of care, Preston says. Plans must help Medicaid recipients "learn how to become better patients" by using physician offices and developing relationships with physicians. McKesson "spends a lot of time helping patients pick a medical home and establish care with a doctor," Wadhwa says.

• **Utilize community resources.** Wadhwa cites McKesson's strong partnerships with clinics, providers and academic health centers as keys to its success. In Mississippi, McKesson works with a trade group of community health centers whose physicians are willing to see more Medicaid patients.

"The common theme for us has been: This population has a lot of barriers to care, and we certainly don't think we can remove those barriers by ourselves, so how do we engage local stakeholders and other approaches to help us in improving care?"

Airlogix often works with the **United Way** and other charities, and it educates patients about community resources that they aren't aware of, Riley says. Not only is this the right thing to do, she says, but because Airlogix puts its fees at risk against its patient outcomes, it makes sense to help the patients utilize whatever resources that might help them stay healthy.

• **Work unconventional hours.** AmeriHealth DM staff often work at unusual hours to reach Medicaid patients, Preston says. Evenings and Saturdays will work particularly well. "If you try to deliver Medicaid disease management the same way you deliver commercial disease management, you're not coordinated with the lifestyle of the people you're trying to reach," he says. ■