eMR-ABC software improving brain care throughout Indiana

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Older Indiana adults with dementia or depression will be among the best cared for elders in the nation beginning this month with the statewide roll-out of a unique automated decision-support system that enables their care coordinators to meet the complex bio-psychosocial needs of these individuals as well as those of their family members and other informal caregivers.

Use of the Enhanced Electronic Medical Record Aging Brain Care Software, developed and tested by the Indiana University Center for Aging Research and the Regenstrief Institute, is being implemented throughout the state by Indiana's 16 Area Agencies on Aging. Area Agencies on Aging, of which there are 650 nationwide, oversee state and federal funds and private donations to provide information, advocacy and support services to older adults and family caregivers.

"The number of older adults nationally and in Indiana is growing rapidly. Delivering personalized care to this population is difficult and requires the ability to track a sizeable number of mental and physical indicators," said geriatrician Malaz Boustani, M.D., MPH, associate director of the IU Center for Aging Research, Regenstrief Institute investigator and the Richard M. Fairbanks Professor in Aging Research at the IU School of Medicine. "The software we have developed will help the care coordinators based at Indiana Area Agencies on Aging, who have the expertise and resources needed to measure and meet the many bio-psychosocial needs of these patients and their loved ones and monitor the effectiveness of individualized care plans."

The software, known as eMR-ABC, can be used independently or with most electronic medical record and health information exchange systems. eMR-ABC captures and monitors the cognitive, functional, behavioral and psychological symptoms of older adults suffering from dementia or depression. It also collects information on the burden placed on patients' family caregivers.

Utilizing this information, the software application provides decision support to area agency care coordinators, who, working with physicians, social workers and other members of the older adult's health care team, will create a personalized care plan that includes evidence-based non-pharmacological protocols, self-management handouts and alerts of medications with potentially adverse cognitive effects. The software's built-in engine tracks patient visits and can be used to generate population reports for specified indicators such as cognitive decline or caregiver burnout.

"New models of care, supported by population health management tools such as eMR-ABC, are needed if we are to provide improved quality of care and encourage better health outcomes for our patients in a cost sensitive manner," said Dr. Boustani, who directs the Eskenazi Health Center Healthy Aging Brain Center. "Simply put, we are using health information technology to manage and monitor a high-risk population while achieving the triple aim of better health and better care at lower cost."

Area Agencies on Aging are uniquely positioned within communities to enable large numbers of older adults and those who care for them to benefit from this new management tool that improves the ability to manage the complex health care for this vulnerable population.

"The eMR-ABC software gives us a powerful new tool to monitor the health of the people served by CICOA. The eMR will allow our care managers to tailor care plans and social supports to the individual needs of the clients," said Orion Bell, MBA, president and CEO of CICOA, the largest Area Agency on Aging in Indiana.

The eMR-ABC software was initially developed by the IU Center for Aging Research and Regenstrief

Institute scientists for use with Eskenazi Health's
Aging Brain Care Medical Home collaborative care
model. The innovative software is a compatible
plug-in to most existing electronic medical records
systems and health information exchanges. It was
recently licensed to Preferred Population Health
Management, LLC.

Provided by Indiana University

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