

Background

Who We Are

AIDS Healthcare Foundation (AHF) is a global organization providing care and advocacy to people living with HIV/AIDS (PLWHA) through integrated healthcare delivery. The domestic healthcare centers offer specialized primary care services for HIV-positive clients at 26 sites nationwide.

Meaningful Use

Meaningful use is a program sponsored by Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) incentivizing providers and hospitals to adopt electronic health records (EHR) to improve the quality of health care. Benefits of meaningful use include:

- Complete and accurate information
- Better access to information
- Patient empowerment

Stage 1 of Meaningful Use is employing certified EHR technology to identify patient-specific educational resources and provide those resources to the patient, if applicable. This measure set requires 10% of unique patients to be documented as receiving patient-specific educational resources.

Fact Sheets

AHF Fact Sheet Library

AHF maintains a Fact Sheet Library of educational handouts designed for people living with HIV/AIDS. The Library contains 77 fact sheets with topics relevant to this population:

- Advice for people living with HIV/AIDS (PLWHA)
- Antiretroviral Medications
- Health Conditions Common to PLWHA

Project Description

Leveraging Meaningful Use

In 2012, AHF participated in the Meaningful Use for EHRs sponsored by the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS). This opportunity was leveraged to promote health literacy through the inclusion of low literacy health education materials in the AHF Centricity Practice Solution 9.5 EHR platform. Existing educational materials in the EHR were outdated and written at the 9th-11th grade reading level.

Program Objectives

- Implement health literacy best practices
- Translate the Library to Plain Language
- Reduce reading level to below 6th grade
- Engage providers in the revision process
- Translate the Fact Sheet Library into Spanish
- Replace outdated materials in the EHR

Plain Language Translation

A multidisciplinary team of clinical and non-clinical staff reviewed the content of the Library for accuracy and relevance. All invitations to participate in the review included education on the importance of providing low literacy health materials to PLWHA. Reviewers represented diverse professional expertise including:

- Physicians
- Pharmacists
- Case Managers
- Quality Professionals
- Clients



Results

Topics	Advice for Living with HIV	Medications	Common Health Conditions
Original Reading Level	8.2	6.4	6.9
Reading Level After Revision	4.5	4.7	4.6

- Initial phases of the project included revision of the Library into plain language.
- Focus group of AHF clients guided the more effective use of fact sheet medical terminology.
- Flesh-Kincaid reading level was reduced on all fact sheets by an average 2.5 grade levels to below a 6th grade reading level.
- Revised Fact Sheet Libraries were uploaded to CPS to allow providers direct access to easy-to-read health education materials.
- Providers encouraged to distribute the handouts and document in accordance with meaningful use objectives.

Policy Implications

- Health information delivered in plain language and multiple formats increases patient comprehension
- Incentives for meaningful use adoption encourages providers to make available low-literacy educational materials for their patients
- Organizational awareness and commitment to change are strengthened leveraging public policy mandates such as health care provider adoption of meaningful use objectives

Sources

1. Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services. Meaningful Use. Available at: http://www.cms.gov/Regulations-and-Guidance/Legislation/EHRIncentivePrograms/Meaningful_Use.html. Accessibility verified on April 15, 2013.
2. Plain Language Acton and Information Network. Federal Plain Language Guidelines, Available at: <http://www.plainlanguage.gov/howto/guidelines/FederalPLGuidelines/FederalPLGuidelines.pdf>. Accessibility verified on April 15, 2013.
3. Doak CG, Doak LG, Root JR. *Teaching Patients with Low Literacy Skills* 2nd ed. Philadelphia, PN: J.B. Lippencott Company; 1996.

Target Population

People living with HIV/AIDS receiving health care services from primary care specialists in AHF healthcare centers nationwide.

HIV affects millions of people worldwide – people living with HIV as well as their friends, families and partners. AIDS Healthcare Foundation is dedicated to providing cutting edge medicine and advocacy regardless of ability to pay.