

BRIGHT LIGHTS AWARD

2013

Advances in Health Promotion and Chronic Disease Management Award Winner — The Credit Valley Family Health Team Lung League

Achieving the Triple Aim on the COPD Journey



Although Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease (COPD) is the leading cause of hospitalization of the elderly and a leading cause of death worldwide, it is commonly under-diagnosed in patients with mild to moderate conditions. The result is increased suffering and missed opportunities to ease its impact. The Credit Family Health Team used the Institute for Healthcare Improvement's triple aim — better health, better care, better cost — as its guiding principle in a project to improve its early diagnosis, treatment and care processes for COPD.

The teams' "Lung League" set a goal for its quality improvement project: reducing COPD patients' visits to the emergency department for acute exacerbation by 50% by June 30, 2013. The project, started in September 2012, began with a careful process to identify all patients with COPD — bearing in mind the likelihood it had been missed in many patients. Electronic records were reviewed for people who had been treated for COPD, bronchitis, or emphysema, prescribed medications to treat them, or had spirometry testing. The 650 people that search turned up were then rated and scored for their likelihood of having COPD. Their charts were screened by a nurse practitioner, pharmacist and registered nurse to determine whether they had COPD. In the end, the COPD patient registry held 144 names and those who had not visited the clinic for three months or longer were telephoned and asked to come in. When those patients came in for appointments, they were given education sessions, while plans were made for managing their COPD, involving all members of the care team as well as specialists, hospital and community care.

The Credit Family Health Team Lung League showed COPD care can be improved to reduce emergency visits and hospitalization for patients. It also improved the health of patients, increased patient and provider satisfaction with care and saved the healthcare system money. The league believes its model can be replicated by other primary care teams to improve processes for treating other types of chronic diseases.