



IPA and FQHCs Use of Communicator To Improve Patient Engagement

Background

This customer is a network of 18 member organizations across a 23-county area in upstate New York, primarily serving under-resourced communities. The network includes eleven community health centers (FQHCs and FQHC Look-Alikes), six behavioral health organizations, and one rural health network. As the first IPA in New York State to integrate primary care, behavioral health, and social determinants of health, their holistic approach aims to improve community wellness. They focus on engaging their largely Medicaid-enrolled population by scheduling annual wellness visits and preventative health care to identify risks early. However, barriers such as homelessness, poverty, low health literacy, limited internet access, and language differences make communication and engagement challenging. However, these barriers also pose challenges to typical health center-to-patient communication that can support engagement such as email, online health portals, or sending reminders in the mail. One of their FQHCs was tasked with re-engaging individuals who hadn't used Medicaid services in over 12 months, a key Population Health goal linked to incentive payments.

Situation

At the beginning of 2021, nearly 18% of patients in their network were part of a cohort that had not received any Medicaid services in over 12 months. The customer recognized that, over time, engaged patients typically had better outcomes at a lower cost. However, continually sending letters and making calls that were unsuccessful in engaging patients was an overwhelming task for health center administrative staff with limited resources. As the world shifted to one where texts became a more convenient way for patients to engage, their FQHC sought a tool to optimize and streamline engagement efforts to make better use of staff time and be more successful at reaching patients.

Solution

The customer added The Garage's Communicator tool to its Bridge Population Health Management platform and implemented it at the FQHC. Supported by the customer, the FQHC staff accurately identified a cohort of patients who had not received Medicaid services in over 12 months and seamlessly deployed Communicator to reach out to that group. Patients were sent text messages reminding them to schedule and attend upcoming appointments. Staff were able to send texts in large batches and communicate with patients in real-time, greatly reducing administrative time. Nearly every patient who owned or had access to a cell phone with text functionality, so this simple



outreach made a significant difference in connecting with patients in a way that maximized convenience, access, and efficiency.

Outcome

Supported by the customer's data analytics, partnership with payers, and the Communicator tool, the FQHC's team was able to drive down their rate of patients who had not received services in over 12 months from 25.35% (January 2021) to 16.01% (December 2021). By efficiently connecting with patients in a way that is accessible and convenient, the FQHC can engage individuals in their own wellness and to focus on what matters most: providing more members of its community with affordable and accessible care.

"One of our FQHC's key goals is to ensure we are able to reach patients and others throughout the community exactly where they are in their health journey. By implementing the Communicator into our process, we were able to efficiently and effectively reach patients and others to engage and improve their overall health. Many of our patients and members of the communities we serve already have a lot to worry about or remember. So, by utilizing this tool and resource we were able to provide an extra layer of needed support and appointment reminders to make sure we are enhancing the health of our community."

- President and CEO

"The communicator is a very useful tool. I had a messaging campaign with over 300 patients. I messaged the 300 patients at once and communicated with them in real time. The communicator is a great tool to have!"

- Outreach Coordinator

Interested in learning how The Garage can empower your organization?
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