



Thought Papers
& Case Studies Series

Valor Healthcare Invests in Leadership Development to Improve Patient Outcomes

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HEALTHCARE



Overview

In an ever-evolving healthcare landscape, leaders must utilize strategies that enhance teamwork and engagement while improving patient outcomes. In a study of healthcare work force turnover, researchers found that low engagement was a high predictor of turnover for clinicians (Willard-Grace et al., 2019) and led to lower rates of preventative care and patient satisfaction (Plomondon et al., 2007). Additionally, patients whose primary care physician left the workforce or changed practice locations sought less primary care and more specialty care, urgent care, and emergency department care services (Sabety et al., 2021). Leaders in the healthcare industry must employ innovative and strategic measures to ensure staff are engaged in order to ensure continuity of care and ongoing positive outcomes for patients.

Background

Valor Healthcare, Inc. is a national leader delivering primary and behavioral healthcare services to more than 160,000 veterans in over 50 clinics across 16 states each year. As the largest contract provider of primary care services to the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA), Valor has a responsibility to continuous quality improvement and ensuring that America's heroes continue to receive the world-class healthcare services they deserve. As an industry leader, Valor invests in quality. In addition to a robust data driven quality plan, Valor invests in our single greatest asset for quality improvement – our leaders.

Recognizing the changing needs of our leaders across the country, Valor engaged with FranklinCovey, a respected advisor in leadership and business execution, and its online learning module, "The 4 Essential Roles of Leadership." We made this content available to all national and regional leaders. Leveraging the training provided through FranklinCovey, Valor leadership found early success implementing the "Wildly Important Goal" (WIG) strategy as a means to engage our colleagues and improve patient outcomes.

Solution Details

As outlined in the leadership program, Valor's Area Director of Operations (ADO) executed the process outlined below to engage the team in one of our Tennessee clinics in developing a weekly WIG. The clinic has two Patient Aligned Care Teams (PACT), each of which cares for a defined panel of patients.

The teams worked in friendly competition to improve outcomes in two important preventive clinical measures – blood pressure control in non-diabetic patients and influenza vaccination rates for patients 65 and older.

Standard Operating Procedure



ADO uses VA's Electronic Quality Measures (eQM) database to pull outcome measures for the clinic at the beginning of the week.

1



PACT Teams review the data and choose one measure to be the WIG for that week, including the targeted improvement amount for that week.

2



PACT Teams work together to develop and implement the improved/redesigned process or workflow changes they believe will impact the WIG the most.

3



ADO pulls the eQM data again the following week to measure progress, after which staff choose a new WIG for the following week.

4

Outcome

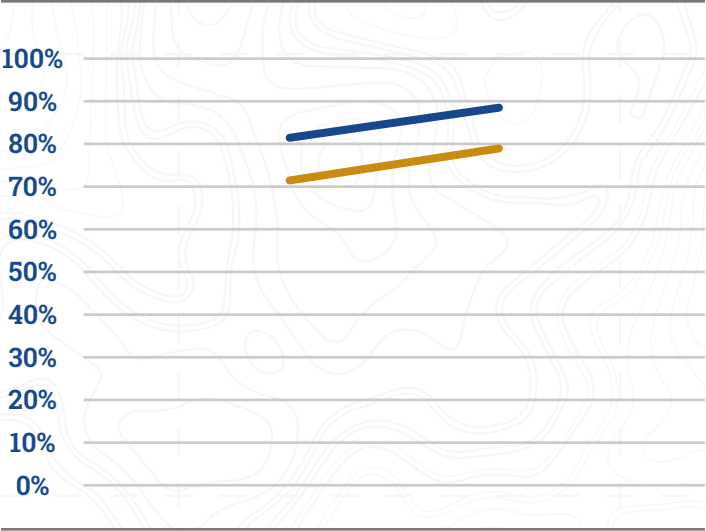
Valor measures its success on all quality measures against the VA national average as well as the average scores for the parent VA Medical Center to which the clinic belongs – in this case, VA Tennessee Valley Healthcare System (VATVHS).

The first two weeks of this process resulted in resounding success for both clinic staff and the veterans served. The first week, the clinic PACT Teams chose to focus on Non-Diabetes Mellitus Blood Pressure control, or "Non-DM Blood Pressure" and set a goal for 2.5% improvement from baseline.

After one week of increased focus and friendly competition, PACT Team 1 achieved a 6.2% increase and PACT Team 2 achieved a 6.4% increase.

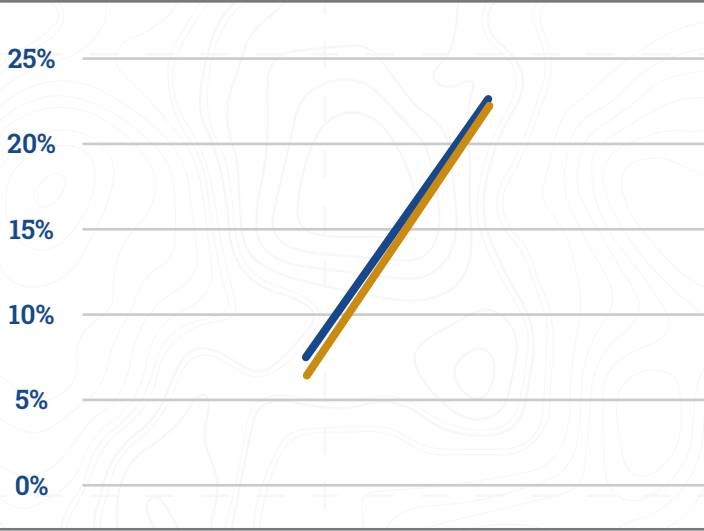
The second week, the teams chose to focus on flu vaccine utilization for veterans aged 65 and over and set a goal of a 5% increase from baseline. After one week of focus on this goal, PACT Team 1 achieved a 15% increase and PACT Team 2 achieved a 15.6% increase. The trend graphs below demonstrate the improvement achieved by each PACT Team.

Non-DM Blood Pressure Control



	Start	End
PACT Team 1	82%	88%
PACT Team 2	72%	79%

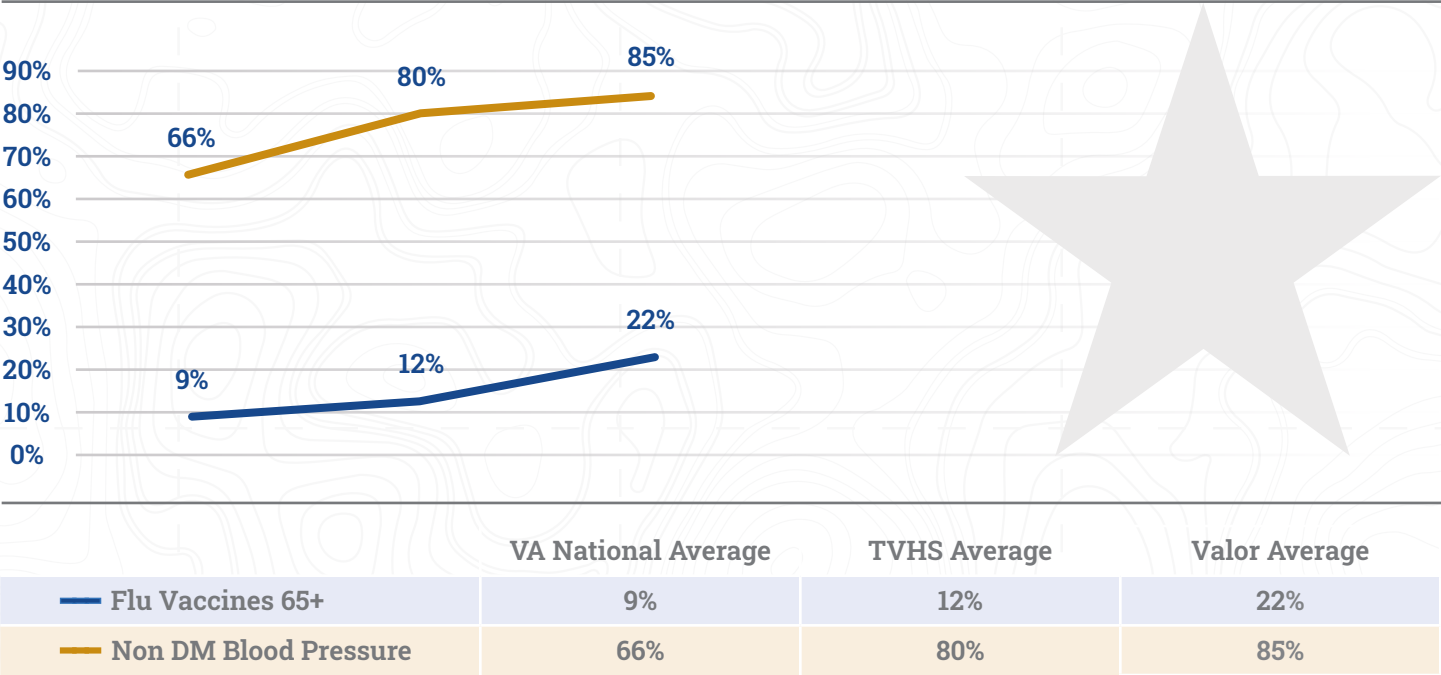
Flu Vaccines 65+



	Start	End
PACT Team 1	8%	23%
PACT Team 2	7%	22%

At the beginning of this initiative, Valor was below both the VA national and VATVHS averages in these measures. Within one week of implementation, Valor surpassed both our own goal and the National and Medical Center averages for both measures. The summary graph below clearly demonstrates that a WIG-based leadership strategy and focus on quality results in immediate improvement in clinical outcomes that improve patients' health.

Patient Outcome Comparison



Conclusion

Healthcare is evolving at an unprecedented rate. Leaders must evolve in their strategies and approaches to ensure that medical providers and staff stay engaged and focused on continuous quality improvement for patients. Valor is again proving ourselves as an industry leader and world-class healthcare provider through use of a robust data-driven quality improvement plan and investment in its leaders. Providing the tools and support for leaders to innovate, and cementing those successful innovations as best demonstrated practices for the organization, has resulted in an engaged and excited clinic team and improved, patient-centered clinical outcomes.

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