

Enhancing wellness through guideline concordant follow-up and treatment for patients with diabetes and chronic kidney disease

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The National Kidney Foundation (NKF) and Sanford Health partnered to evaluate and improve overarching quality of care among diabetic patients with chronic kidney disease (CKD) in the Sanford Health Population. Chronic kidney disease is a common complication of diabetes, however early identification and intervention can substantially improve patient outcomes. At Sanford Health, an initial analysis revealed low levels of urine albumin-creatinine ratio testing, gaps in CKD diagnosis in primary care, and limited interventions that slow CKD progression and reduce associated cardiovascular risk.

Recommendations from the NKF CKD Change Package were used to develop a system-wide intervention to improve CKD testing and diagnosis, while increasing the use of sodium-glucose cotransporter-2 inhibitors (SGLT2i) among people with diabetes receiving care at Sanford Health. This intervention included the following: 1) laboratory implementation of the NKF-recommended Kidney Profile testing; 2) update of relevant electronic health (EHR) record SmartSets; 3) addition of CKD testing to the EHR health maintenance menu, and 4) easy access to education, tools, and resources for clinicians and patients embedded in the EHR. Implementation of the comprehensive intervention was initiated through a series of continuing medical education webinars.

Within the first 10 months of the program, the percentage of people with diabetes receiving guideline concordant CKD testing rose from 38% at program start-up to 70%. The number of people with laboratory evidence of CKD with an ICD-10 code in their health record rose from 20% to 73%, with corresponding prescriptions of sodium-glucose cotransporter-2 inhibitors (SGLT2i) among people with CKD rising from <2% to 9.6%.

These impressive findings reinforce the scalability of the methodology recommended in the NKF CKD Change Package which can result in rapid improvements in CKD-related process measures to positively impact CKD patient outcomes, with limited provider burden.

