Chronic conditions are among the most common, costly, and preventable of all health problems in the U.S. Many chronic conditions are either caused or exacerbated by issues such as poor nutrition, lack of exercise, excess stress, alcohol abuse, and tobacco use. The practice of Lifestyle Medicine (LM) is specifically geared toward working with patients to address these adaptive challenges in a clinical setting. Health care professionals rely excessively on technical solutions e.g. drug treatment to patients’ adaptive (lifestyle) problems.1

Purpose

The purpose of this project was to illustrate ways of transforming the clinical practice, through clinical environment and systems changes, in order to meet the challenges of new and emerging policies. These transformations enable clinical practices to facilitate patients’ adaptive work and treat the underlying causes of chronic conditions to improve care, improve health, and reduce costs.

Environment

Lifestyle Medicine Department – physically locate LM services within primary care

Fitness Room located within primary care clinic—ask patients to come in before appointment or stay after to use the fitness room. Staff the fitness area with trained healthy lifestyle coaches.

“Nutrition on the Move”-take healthy food demonstrations and samples into the waiting room.

Teaching kitchen located within primary care. Offer hands on cooking classes.

Healthy vending-provide foods that are contribute to health for staff and patients.

Systems

- What is the main reason for your visit today?
- Pick 1 activity that you can do to improve your health:
  - □ Help Patients Prepare for Their Visit
  - □ How important is this to your health? Circle a number.
  - 0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Integrate physical activity and nutrition into EMR as “Vital Signs”

Facilitate patient goal setting and self-management support

Enable LM- “Care Plan” to address physical activity, nutrition, weight management, tobacco use, stress management, and alcohol use.

References

Please contact me with any questions or ideas you may have regarding the integration of Lifestyle Medicine into primary care.

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