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N.C. INITIATIVE HELPS CONNECT SICKLE CELL PATIENTS IN ED WITH PRIMARY CARE DOCTORS, PROPER MEDICATION

North Carolina Community Care Networks improves care, reduces costs

Raleigh, N.C. (September 1, 2015) – Patients with Sickle Cell Disorder (SCD) who show up in the Emergency Department (ED) are getting better care thanks to North Carolina Community Care Networks (NCCCN), the physician-led nonprofit that helps manage care for 1.4 million Medicaid recipients.

The NCCCN Call Center helps ensure that sickle cell patients are promptly connected with care management so that appropriate primary care SCD specialty care can be arranged. Most Sickle Cell Patients are well linked with primary care providers as pediatric patients, but that close relationship can be disrupted when they reach adulthood. The Sickle Cell initiative is part of a comprehensive approach, building on collaboration with Pediatrics, specialists, behavioral health, and emergency department providers.

The Call Center provides a single telephone number through which North Carolina emergency department staff can arrange referrals for both Medicaid and non-Medicaid Sickle Cell patients. Medicaid patients are directed to their local NCCCN network office where care managers review their treatment history, arrange follow-up care as necessary, and work closely with them in reaching their health goals. Non-Medicaid patients are referred via secure messaging to a state Sickle Cell Educator.

The Call Center also offers Health Coaching to Sickle Cell patients as directed by their doctor. Health Coaches ensure patients are receiving appropriate care and pain management and assist patients in stress management, nutrition, hydration and exercise. They also review medications, teach them to manage infections to which sickle cell patients can be susceptible, and help them keep up with appointments and scheduled vaccinations.

“Call Center staff reach out to more than 10,000 patients a month,” said Call Center Manager Deborah Murray, RN. “This is particularly helpful with diseases like Sickle Cell where patients can sometimes fall through the cracks and not get the care they need to stay out of the Emergency Department and the hospital. We help reconnect Sickle Cell patients with their primary care physicians and other providers as part of a coordinated treatment plan. If we can catch people at the right point, we can significantly improve their health – and save the state program a lot of money.”

Hospitals say the Sickle Cell Program is “easy to use and very effective for patients” and staff with the state’s NC Sickle Cell Syndrome Program report call the initiative “the best thing since sliced bread!”

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About North Carolina Community Care Networks
NCCCN is a community-based, public-private partnership that takes a population management approach to improving health care and containing costs for North Carolina’s most vulnerable populations. NCCCN creates “medical homes” in all 100 counties for Medicaid beneficiaries, individuals that are eligible for both Medicare and Medicaid, privately-insured employees and uninsured people. To learn how NCCCN saves North Carolina millions of dollars every year, visit www.CCNCcares.com. For more information, visit our website, www.communitycarenc.org.

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