



Premier Kids Program at La Rabida Children's Hospital

Premier Kids Program, at La Rabida Children's Hospital, began the Medical Home Quality Improvement (QI) Team in November 2006 as a part of the Illinois Medical Home Project (IMHP), Phase II. Premier Kids Program offers primary care for children birth through five years of age with chronic medical and/or developmental concerns. Premier Kids embraces the medical home philosophy and utilizes a support team in providing family-centered, comprehensive, coordinated, culturally sensitive primary care. A goal of this program is to create a centralized, coordinated means of communicating with all disciplines involved in a child's care. In addition, the Premier Kids Program is dedicated to providing a means for families to navigate the medical and developmental communities more easily and to provide them with the skills to advocate for their children.

In building the Quality Improvement team, Premier Kids recruited three parents from the program as well as asking interested staff to volunteer to build the QI Team. As such, the team consists of three parent partners who attend regularly, a pediatrician, program coordinator, nurse practitioner, nurse care coordinator, family social work advocate, program volunteer, and a representative from Illinois Division of Specialized Care for Children. Moreover, Premier Kids has a facilitator from the IMHP to keep team members on target and ensure that everyone is actively participating in the decision making process.

The QI Team's primary focus has been on the development and implementation of a coordinated comprehensive care plan. The QI facilitator provided the team with several Care Plans from other practices as a beginning step in this process of developing a plan that was most useful for Premier Kids. After developing the care plan that would be useful for the children in Premier Kids it was time to pilot its usability. The parent partners volunteered to work on this project with the nurse care coordinator by participating in the creation of a care plan for their children. The care plan was altered several times as a result of the feedback from the parents.

After the care plan was created, the next question for the QI team was how could it be practically utilized in the coordination of the care for their children. The team suggested placing the care plan on a Flash Drive to enable families to easily carry the information with them and to allow all providers easy access to the care plan. Premier Kids copies the care plan to the flash drive and then each family picks their own personal password to access the information on the flash drive. This allows the family to control what other providers they give access to the information on the flash drive. This portable device will be an easy and compact way to manage the information and share it with other health care professionals. Moreover, this will allow other community providers to save their pertinent information within a separate folder on the flash drive created for this purpose. The intention is to use the flash drive to improve communication between providers.

The following is a quote from a family regarding the benefits of having the care plan on a flash drive: "I found it helpful because it limits my repeating myself constantly, especially in an emergency when I want my focus to be on my son."

Dr. Edith Chernoff, primary care physician in Premier Kids, is on the QI Team and has found the use of the flash drive to be useful because "So often essential information is lost between medical caregivers, resulting in deficiencies in patient care or redundancies (ordering tests that have already been done). Having an easy way to communicate with consultants should ensure that no aspect of the patient's care is neglected due to lack of knowledge."

The La Rabida Children's Hospital Premier Kids QI Team was honored to present information about the Flash Drive Care Plan Project at the June 2008 Promising Practices Forum in Bethesda Maryland. Sheri Hurdle, Parent Partner, and Pam Northrop, Program Coordinator, represented the QI team. Pam said "I feel so fortunate to have attended this conference and to be with people so dedicated to improving primary care for children with special health care needs. It was inspiring. I learned so much and came back to Premier Kids re-energized to continue our work in building a medical home."

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