P-PROMPT: Provider & Patient Reminders: Multi-strategy Prevention Tools

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Abstract

P-PROMPT is a demonstration project funded by the Ontario Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care through its Primary Health Care Transition Fund. P-PROMPT aims to systematically increase the delivery of four targeted preventive care services on a large scale. In Ontario, a province of 12 million people in a single-payer health care system, 25-45\% of people eligible by evidence-based recommendations for regular screening for cervical or breast cancer or for influenza or childhood series immunizations are not up-to-date. P-PROMPT designed, implemented, deployed and evaluated a systematic, multi-faceted physician intervention that is centered on patient status information, with an aim to improve rates of cancer screening (pap testing and mammography every 2 years) and immunization (influenza shots every fall and completion of primary childhood series by age 2) in eligible patients. After one year of deployment of the intervention with 249 primary care physicians, whose patient rosters totaled 350,000 people, the Ontario-defined top-tier performance targets were achieved by 52\% of MDs (up from 29\%) for pap screening (> 80\% of rostered women aged 35-69 being up-to-date) and by 61\% of MDs (up from 43\%) for mammography (> 75\% of rostered women aged 50-69 being up-to-date). Immunizations also increased by lesser degrees.

Enabling Systematic Preventive Care Delivery

Primary ambulatory health care is largely delivered opportunistically and managed patient by patient. Yet preventive care such as biannual cancer screening, annual influenza vaccination and completion of primary childhood immunization needs a systematic, timely and proactive approach on a patient population basis if all patients eligible for each preventive care service are to be kept continually up-to-date. The office management needed to accomplish this task is both foreign to traditional clinical practice and prohibitively complex to achieve because patients are continually falling overdue each month and many eligible patients never present at all. P-PROMPT hypothesized that an informatics-based approach that automatically gave providers and their office staff an always up-to-date overview of the current status of all their patients eligible for each preventive care service could enable increased preventive care delivery.

Participants: P-PROMPT recruited 249 physicians having 350,000 patients rostered to their care (3\% of the Ontario population). External data: Acting as the physicians’ agent, P-PROMPT obtained electronic files of their patient rosters, both initially and updated regularly, with demographics and dates of recent mammograms (50\% of total) from the Ontario Ministry of Health. P-PROMPT similarly obtained dates of recent mammograms (other 50\%) from the Ontario Breast Screening Program of Cancer Care Ontario and dates of recent pap tests (over 90\% of total) from Cytobase, a consortium of the major laboratories. Provider reminders: 140 physicians elected “web” and 109 “paper” to receive their 4 regularly updated tracker views (patient lists) from P-PROMPT, one per preventive care service, pre-filled with the most recent service dates and highlighting all overdue patients. Web and paper forms also accepted data entry by office staff of ongoing new preventive care service dates and of patient ineligibilities, e.g. hysterectomy or breast cancer. These office-supplied data were received and regularly merged by P-PROMPT, instantly on the web or every 3 months on paper. Physician feedback also included overall physician performance reports. Patient reminders: Twice yearly, P-PROMPT proposed to mail personalized reminder letters to all overdue patients, using physician customized text on physician letterhead over the physician’s signature in a physician return-addressed envelopes. Physicians approved > 90\% of proposed letters for mailing.

Primary results: After 1 year of the P-PROMPT information intervention, 75\% (up from 67\% at baseline) of 86,300 women eligible for pap testing were up-to-date, as were 75\% (up from 68\%) of 40,400 eligible for mammography. 52\% (up from 29\%) of physicians had at least 80\% of eligible women up-to-date for pap testing and 61\% (up from 43\%) had at least 75\% up-to-date for mammography.

P-PROMPT is an innovative multi-faceted information-based intervention that increases preventive care delivery in primary care practice on a large scale. The demonstration will discuss and present the multi-faceted P-PROMPT toolset and further evaluations.