

## Michigan Colorectal Cancer Control Program

# InterCare Community Health Network

During the pandemic, InterCare Community Health Network (ICHN) wanted to find a way to reach its patients and continue their preventive care. When face-to-face visits were not possible, ICHN started sending Fecal Immunochemical Tests (FIT) to patient's homes. ICHN screened patients over the phone so they did not need to come in for an appointment. Other quality improvement efforts were going on simultaneously including staff education and provider notifications. This initiative proved to be very fast, effective, and easy for patients. In the first year ICHN increased screening rates from 38.4% to 50.7%.

**Summary:** The project required a standing order, a gap list of patients, and an educated, dedicated staff member. ICHN chose to use a Medical Assistant (MA) that had been trained as a Community Health Worker (CHW) who was working from home. The CHW dedicated about two days a week to these calls and follow-up. In addition to screening patients over the phone and sending tests to their home, ICHN had an Electronic Health Record (EHR) team working on extracting records from outside EHR systems. ICHN was able to get these records into their system and close many gaps in care.

**Challenge:** The main challenge was working through the ordering process of each test within the E-clinical Works EHR system. The FIT tests required more manual labor and had to be mailed by ICHN staff. The Cologuard test is mailed to the patient by the Cologuard company and reduces the use of clinic staff time.

**Solution:** One dedicated MA was managing all the gap calls and orders. The EHR team, lab coordinator, and MA worked together to make sure the tests were being ordered appropriately and reaching the patient.

**Results:** Goals were met and exceeded with measurable outcomes. The impact of this initiative was that many patients were screened, but also proves that a simple answer may be available when teams think outside the box.

**Testimonial:** "If we could simplify more processes like this for our patients, we would see a major improvement in the American Healthcare system." – Amy Sing, Quality Registered Nurse.

### Lessons Learned:

- Dedicating a single staff member to a task for a set number of hours in a week allows the staff member to become very fast and efficient at what they are focused on.
- Consistent communication, detailed questions, reward, and persistence are needed to keep everyone on task.
- Collaboration with key players in the organization is key.

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