Engaging Stakeholders to Improve Depression Management in a Tribal Health System
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We will develop, test, and refine a stakeholder-centered decision-support tool within a tribally-owned and operated health care organization using depression as the example condition. The project will occur at Southcentral Foundation (SCF), where a patient-centered medical home (PCMH) model has been used since 1999 to deliver primary care services to the largest population of Alaska Native and American Indian people (AN/AIs) in Alaska. In 2001, SCF’s PCMH model of care was expanded to include a depression collaborative. Although many AN/AIs have had their depressive symptoms effectively treated, early discontinuation of antidepressant therapy and/or counseling are of concern. In this proposal, qualitative and quantitative methods will be used to develop, test, and refine a stakeholder-centered decision-support tool to improve communication and better incorporate the perspectives of our stakeholders (i.e., customer-owners, providers, and leaders) into health care decisions. Individuals receiving care at SCF are referred to as customer-owners rather than patients as they are considered to be full partners with providers and leaders in the management of their health and wellbeing. Leaders include SCF administrators, clinical directors, and tribal leaders. In this study, we will determine if a stakeholder-developed decision-support tool can improve engagement in depression treatment and clinical health outcomes in AN/AI individuals receiving primary care services. More specifically, SCF along with several nationally renowned research partners will address three specific aims:

Specific Aim 1: Identify stakeholder understandings, preferences, and needs that influence depression treatment decisions in AN/AI individuals.

Specific Aim 2: Develop, pilot, and evaluate a stakeholder-centered decision-support tool to help translate and integrate evidence-based guidelines, and stakeholder understandings, preferences and needs into depression management decisions.

Specific Aim 3: Determine the impact of the stakeholder-centered decision-support tool on health, service utilization, and economic outcomes.

RELEVANCE

Collaborations built and solidified through this pilot mechanism foster continued stakeholder-focused research. This pilot project will invest in the capacity of SCF, a tribally-owned health care system, to improve the health and wellbeing of its customer-owners. The results will have considerable translation to other chronic health concerns, and will be applicable to other racially and ethnically diverse populations with persistent health disparities. This proposed project directly aligns with the PCORI mission and PFA interests and goals as we will "help people make informed health care decisions" through promotion of stakeholder involvement and use of "evidence-based information."