

Description

Health Leads (HL) is an organization that helps practices address patient's basic needs (such as food, housing and transportation) as a standard part of quality care. HL shares their models and tools, and trains health care organizations. HL helps organizations integrate volunteers or staff, such as community health workers (CHWs), into a clinical team that helps patients find food, clothing, job training or heating assistance. Clinics using HL may screen their patients for social needs and connect them with an advocate who can help them find the right resources. Pediatric offices or community-based organizations can offer this service.

Evidence

- HL improves the living conditions of vulnerable people by addressing non-medical or basic needs as part of health care delivery.¹
- Almost 1,000 advocates helped nearly 9,000 patients and their families access basic resources, between 2011 and 2012, across 21 sites in six cities.²
- HL regularly serves as a health care sector thought leader on addressing the social determinants of health (the conditions in which people are born, live, learn, work, play, worship and age).²
- HL helped 50 percent of client families at one clinic access at least one resource – most often employment, health insurance or food – within six months.³ The HL model reduced unmet social needs for low-income families, and connected the medical home with community-based resources.
- In an urban clinic, more than 10 percent of families used the HL desk, a physical space where patients can connect with HL volunteers and staff to receive information about services they need. The HL desk helped address the social needs of more than 1,000 families.³

Implementation

HL supports organizations and clinical practices while they integrate social health into their systems, including their case management and resource database systems. HL offers Health Leads Reach (a cloud-based database and case management system), as well as staff training, implementation coaching and workshops.

Process

Practices typically launch their pilot social needs program three to six months after initial conversations with HL. The process includes designing the workflow plan, configuring the Health Leads Reach system, finding space, staff reassignment and adjustment and other logistical components. Health Leads also offers payment plans that best suit practice needs.

Decision Makers

Chairpersons, practice managers (including non-unionized, non-medical professionals and general hospital staff) and legal staff should take part in planning and implementation. However, this may vary with each practice.

Recruitment Process

Recruitment methods could include screening patients at the point of care to identify their needs, and waiting room presentations about what the program offers. Recruitment could also include a buy-in presentation for doctors, nurses and other medical professionals. The presentations can highlight how patients benefit from HL and how each staff member will address patient needs.

Billing and Reimbursement

There is currently no billing code for this program.

Resources

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1. Robert Wood Johnson Foundation: Health Leads. (2016). Retrieved from: https://www.rwjf.org/en/how-we-work/grants-explorer/featured-programs/health_leads.html.
 2. Social Impact Exchange: taking successful innovation to scale - Health Leads. (2016). Retrieved from: <http://www.socialimpactexchange.org/organization/health-leads>.
 3. Garg A, Marino M, Vikani AR, Solomon BS. Addressing Families' Unmet Social Needs Within Pediatric Primary Care: The Health Leads Model. *Clinical Pediatrics*. 2012; 20(10):1-3. Retrieved from: <http://www.socialimpactexchange.org/sites/www.socialimpactexchange.org/files/Clinical%20Pediatrics%20-%20The%20Health%20Leads%20Model.pdf>.