

Implementing a Quality Improvement Plan to Increase Reassessment Appointment Adherence Rates among People Living with HIV/AIDS

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Introduction

La Nueva Esperanza Inc. is a Food and Nutrition Services (FNS) provider under Part A of the Ryan White Program. As an FNS provider, La Nueva Esperanza, Inc. (LNE) is programmatically required to reassess enrolled clients for program eligibility. LNE found that a majority of clients failed to attend scheduled Reassessment appointments, despite reminders from program staff.

Without Reassessment information, LNE found itself falling out of compliance with Reassessment expectations, while also being unable to accurately assess the clinical and socio-economic needs of the client. In response to this programmatic challenge, LNE implemented a Quality Improvement Plan to increase Reassessment appointment adherence rates, at the same time promoting and facilitating client engagement in HIV/AIDS care services.

Aim

LNE's Quality Improvement Plan aimed to increase adherence to scheduled Reassessment appointments to 100% of monthly targets, effective July 1, 2017. By achieving 100% Reassessment appointment adherence for all clients, LNE would meet contractually established expectations for the Reassessment of clients and secure client-level information required to verify program eligibility. LNE would also be in a position to ensure optimal continuity of client care across all client service needs.

Methods

LNE's Quality Improvement Plan for Reassessment adherence commenced on July 1, 2017, and employs a multi-pronged approach.

Step One

Reminder Mailings: LNE began sending appointment reminder letters to clients one month in advance of their Reassessment date.

Step Two

Incentive Ineligibility: Clients who failed to appear for their scheduled appointment, without prior notice, became ineligible to receive a MetroCard the next time they presented for any LNE program service. At this juncture, clients were encouraged to meet with FNS program staff to reschedule their Reassessment.

Step Three

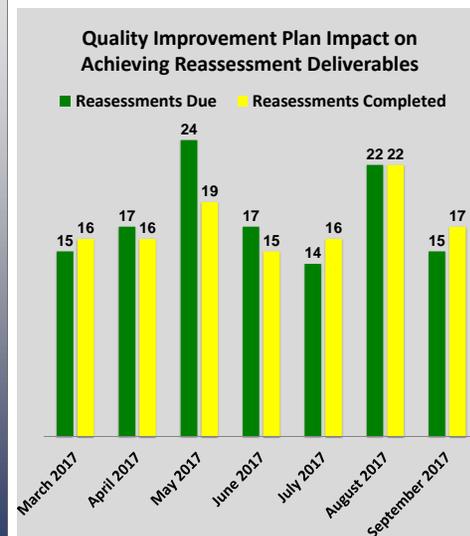
FNS Program Suspension: Clients who presented at LNE for any services who failed to appear for their re-scheduled Reassessment appointment were informed that they would be suspended from the FNS program effective immediately.

However, clients would be reinstated into the FNS program upon being fully reassessed for program eligibility by a contractually-funded FNS staff person.

Results

Implementation of this Quality Improvement Plan resulted in an increase in clients attending scheduled Reassessment appointments to 100% of the monthly target. Between March-June 2017, LNE achieved 100% of Reassessment monthly target solely for the month of March. During the period from July-September 2017, LNE achieved 100% of monthly targets for all three months.

One FNS client who failed to appear for a re-scheduled Reassessment appointment was suspended during September, but this client re-engaged FNS program staff within five days of suspension to reschedule. The client attended this appointment and was reinstated in the FNS program.



Conclusions

The Quality Improvement Plan favorably resulted in increased adherence to scheduled Reassessments for clients enrolled in LNE's FNS program.

All clients suspended from the program due to inactivity contacted FNS program staff within 5 days of suspension to make a Reassessment appointment. Because clients proactively engaged FNS program staff upon suspension, LNE found that the suspension did not adversely affect clients access to Food and Nutrition services.

Identified challenges to the effective implementation of the Quality Improvement Plan include ensuring robust coordination between multiple staff across different LNE programs, and the initial orientation of the Plan to clients.

All LNE staff have been educated on the implementation of the Quality Improvement Plan. All clients are informed of the new policy regarding Reassessment appointment adherence at the initial FNS program enrollment and at program Reassessment.

Due to the successful results of the Plan's initial implementation, LNE will continue to utilize the Quality Improvement Plan for Reassessment appointment adherence.



La Nueva Esperanza

In Memory of Manny Maldonado