

FLORIDA PUBLIC HEALTH ASSOCIATION 2008 ANNUAL EDUCATION CONFERENCE

A Local Assessment of Ambulatory Care Sensitive Conditions

Rebecca T. Filipowicz, MPH, MS, CHES; Luminita Razalia, MS, Elena Reuter, MPH

Statement of Problem (Significance): Prevention is the preferred approach for combating numerous health conditions, diseases, and deaths. Getting timely and adequate care for preventable conditions is often associated with access to primary care, cost, and education. Ambulatory Care Sensitive Conditions (ACSCs) are potentially preventable medical problems that, with proper treatment and managed care, do not require hospitalization or emergency room (ER) visits.

Goal/Objective: The goal is to describe the impact ACSCs have on hospitalizations and ER visits, vulnerable population groups, and the health care system.

Description of program or intervention: The Center for Health Statistics, at the Institute for Health, Policy and Evaluation Research, Duval County Health Department performed an analysis of ACSC's in Duval County using Agency for Health Care Administration data from 2005.

Results/Outcomes: Data revealed ACSCs accounted for 20.4% of hospital discharges and 20.7% of ER visits. Common ACSC discharges were due to urinary/kidney infections, ear/nose/throat infections, asthma, hypertension, and diabetes. ACSC ER data shows largely impacted groups were females, blacks, young children and older adults. ER data reviewed for ACSCs by reimbursement type showed a majority of patients were on government plans for the economically disadvantaged (34.6%) or self paid/underinsured (29%). Total costs were evaluated to determine the impact ACSCs have on the health care system. The total cost for ACSCs was \$90,044,842 for ER visits, and \$571,847,704 for hospitalizations.

Conclusions and/or Implications: Assessment of avoidable ER visits and hospitalizations is necessary for evaluating primary care access, quality of care issues, prevention strategies and policies, and excessive cost. Society shares the cost burden of ACSCs because of the high number of patients using public/government health insurance or charity. The direct cost of ER visits and hospitalizations is only a portion of the real economic impact. Adults and children who experience these conditions may be absent from work or school which impacts both them and society.
