

Massachusetts Coalition for the Prevention of Medical Errors

Anticoagulation Initiative Overview

Warfarin is at, or near, the top of every recent survey of medications leading to emergency department visits and resulting hospital admissions. Studies of practices in which the patient is managed from the office setting, without an anticoagulation monitoring and management service or comparable office-based protocol, demonstrate relatively high complication rates of warfarin treatment. Warfarin management can be burdensome given the workflows and time demands on the average practicing physician.

In response, the Massachusetts Coalition for the Prevention of Medical Errors (MA Coalition) has prepared a statewide initiative to encourage appropriate use of warfarin and the safe and effective management of those patients to reliably achieve anticoagulation in the therapeutic range. This initiative has also included articles in *Vital Signs*, a half-day program focused on the clinical management of patients on warfarin, a half-day program for those looking to improve their anticoagulation service or planning to start a clinic, medical grand rounds at selected hospitals, and posting of information on the MA Coalition web site. The MA Coalition partnered with its member organizations, the Massachusetts Medical Society (MMS) and the Massachusetts Association of Health Plans (MAHP). Activities to date included and planned for the future are listed below:

November 2007 - the Massachusetts Medical Society (MMS) in partnership with the MA Coalition conducted a survey of Massachusetts physicians related to current anticoagulation practices. A summary of those results is available on this web site.

May 15, 2008 - the MA Coalition presented, *Anticoagulation Management in the Ambulatory Setting: Recommendations from the Massachusetts Coalition for the Prevention of Medical Errors* at the National Patient Safety Foundation Congress, Nashville, TN.

June/July 2008 - Issue of the MMS' publication, *Vital Signs*, an article on this statewide initiative was published with authors Joseph L. Dorsey, MD, Daniel E. Singer, MD, and Jack E. Ansell, MD.

November 4, 2008 - the MA Coalition in partnership with the Massachusetts Medical Society held two programs, morning and afternoon sessions titled *Strategies for Safely Managing Patients on Warfarin*. Participants heard from nationally recognized experts on anticoagulation management. The morning program was oriented toward physicians to help, initiate, or improve their management of anticoagulation patients. The audience for the morning session was physicians who are employed by a hospital or physician organization and are in a position to spread the improvement message to their medical staff and to other physician groups. We also encouraged attendance by physicians practicing in the community who manage patients on warfarin.

The afternoon program, *Strategies for Safely Managing Patients on Warfarin: Focus on Anticoagulation Services and Clinics*, was held on the same day and was intended for participants from anticoagulation clinics and those looking to start a clinic. The afternoon included demonstrations of available anticoagulation software and strategies to improve safe transitions of care as patients move from one setting to another.

Grand Rounds Presentations – Anticoagulation Management presentation at Hospital Grand Rounds are available beginning in April 2009. For more information, contact Effie Pappas Brickman at 781-2626-6082 or ebrickman@macoalition.org.

Audio Conference Calls – A series of Anticoagulation Management presentations by audio conference calls are being planned for 2009. For more information, check the MA Coalition web site at www.macoalition.org.

The strategy for this statewide initiative which crosses health care settings includes:

- Improvement to Delivery System
 - Large Practices/Small Practices
 - Patient Referral to an AMMS
 - Guidelines
 - Clinical, Management and Monitoring, Transitions, Measures, Patient Education, Provider Education
 - Toolkit
 - Curriculum
- Payer Incentives
- Communications
 - Patients, Providers, Anticoagulation Clinics, Health Centers, SNFs, Nursing Homes
- Evaluation

Next Steps by the MA Coalition with its Collaborators will include:

- Addressing anticoagulation management in the ambulatory setting first
 - Share processes and guidelines that contribute to improvement of anticoagulation management in Massachusetts
- Address this topic in long-term care facilities
- Work with payers to address financial concerns
- Establish measures to evaluate improvement