



July 2012 Telephone Lifestyle Coaching Recruitment Winner Wilkes-Barre (PA) VAMC

Several months ago, as the Wilkes-Barre VAMC began the TLC pilot program, HBC Dr. Timothy Lomauro began sending staff an informative e-mail to start each month. “I worked with the Chief of Staff’s office to send a monthly e-mail to clinicians to inform and update them about this relatively new program,” he explains. “Staff members have found these e-mails—which include NCP’s comprehensive program information and additional documents like process flow sheets and goal-setting guidance—to be really helpful.” Lomauro believes that using e-mail to keep the program “top of mind” for staff has been one of several initiatives that has helped produce the 34 percent increase in TLC recruitment that the facility achieved from June to July of 2012.

Face-To-Face

Lomauro, who is a clinical psychologist as well as the VAMC’s Tobacco Cessation Coordinator, has augmented the regular e-mails with face-to-face meetings. “Showing staff how to do a ‘good’ TLC referral is key, and we’ve brought this knowledge right to them, in their clinics,” he says. “I regularly present in the Primary Care Clinic, have gone to the Mental Health Clinic, visited with individual MOVE!® staff, and met with small groups at departmental service meetings, for example, to educate them on TLC initiation and consultation. I think that this kind of personalized approach and persistence has really paid off in terms of program uptake and success.”

Integration

Lomauro has also integrated TLC into the existing HPDP programs offered at the VAMC and its six CBOCs. “I am the facilitator for our *TEACH* and MI training classes, and I always include a segment on TLC,” he reports. “I go over the TLC basics and do demos in CPRS to show clinicians how to enter consults. The feedback on this instruction has been very positive.” Wilkes-Barre’s MOVE!® Program has been another program that lends itself well to TLC promotion.



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“We often get TLC consults from our MOVE!® Education and Support groups. So we’ve made it a point to go to the final MOVE!® class that Veterans attend here and present about clinical telehealth and TLC,” Lomauro says. “We want Veterans to be aware of the great support that is available from the TLC program, and how it can help them to maintain their healthy lifestyles.”



(L to R) Dr. Bina Ahmed, Chief, Primary Care Services; Paola Montross, MOVE!® Program Coordinator; Crystal Newcomb, Clinical Social Worker; Dr. Tim Lomauro, HBC; Dr. Jillian Snyder, Clinical Pharmacy Specialist; Tammy Evans, Nurse Manager, Primary Care Services

Wired

As at other facilities, Lomauro has found that technology is an effective way to spread the TLC message. “Although I routinely travel to the CBOCs to facilitate education on HPDP activities and programs, including TLC, we’re also relying on different media and technologies to get the word out,” he explains. “We post TLC information—articles, quotes, slides, etc.—on our facility’s Web site, but we also use electronic message boards and TV monitors located around the facility to display basic TLC content and the TLC video.” In the future, Lomauro hopes to upgrade these displays in more locations to more dynamically promote TLC along with the HLMs and tobacco cessation activities. Initial feedback on TLC has been great from both staff and patients at Wilkes-Barre. “Having another effective resource to help patients is something the providers like,” says Lomauro. “And TLC provides the outreach that’s needed for older and more distant Veterans, with greater convenience for younger Veterans, who are often at work during the day.” Lomauro relates that TLC patients also appreciate the coaching interactions. “A Veteran enrolled in the VAMC’s Stress Reduction group told me that he really values the personal contact with his TLC coach, in part because he lives alone and appreciates the kind of caring contact he receives,” he says.



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Push

Moving into 2013, Lomauro has specific plans for continuing to promote TLC at the VAMC and its clinics. He thinks that social media is a great way to advertise TLC, and also envisions it in the new patient orientation. “We want to give Veterans more than just basic information and handouts during the roughly 2-hour new patient orientation that we do here,” he explains. “So we’ll soon be introducing TLC, the HLMS, and a short wellness goal-setting exercise into the orientation session, to provide Veterans the opportunity to start on improving their health at the outset of their VA care experience.”

Lomauro will continue to work with the great team at Wilkes-Barre that has helped ensure TLC’s success. “A number of other staff members have been critical to the program,” he says. “MOVE!® Program Coordinator Paola Montross, staff psychologist Dr. Christy Rothermel, social worker Crystal Newcomb, and lead Primary Care nurse manager Tammy Evans have all contributed greatly. Also, Leaders such as Chief of Primary Care Dr. Bina Ahmed and Chief of Nutrition and Food Services Melissa Novak have been very supportive of TLC. It’s been a truly collaborative effort and great to see staff from different backgrounds working together to improve HPDP services and Veteran health.”



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