

Rush University earns HIMSS Davies Award Of Excellence

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Chicago's Rush University has been earned the HIMSS Davies Award Of Excellence for its work using health IT to treat veterans with post-traumatic stress disorder, more commonly known as PTSD.

The provider organization recognized that approximately 23 percent of U.S. veterans who served in Afghanistan and Iraq suffer from PTSD. Despite the availability of effective evidence-based treatments for PTSD, research has suggested that less than 20 percent of these veterans actually receive these interventions, HIMSS reported.

Furthermore, of the veterans who receive evidence-based PTSD treatments, close to 40 percent do not complete them and therefore do not receive adequate therapeutic doses. Consequently, it is important to identify ways to increase access to evidence-based PTSD treatments and to help veterans stay engaged in treatment so that they can complete their course of therapy, HIMSS said.

To address these critical needs, the "Road Home Program: Center for Veterans and Their Families" at Rush University Medical Center developed an intensive treatment program for veterans with PTSD. The three-week-long program offers a combination of evidence-based PTSD treatments and adjunctive services. Rush is one of the first health systems in the country to offer intensive PTSD treatment, so it was important to ensure that this novel PTSD treatment delivery method was effective, HIMSS explained.

Innovating with clinical data

The Road Home Program worked to address veterans not receiving adequate amounts of therapy by systematically capturing clinical data, including but not limited to PTSD and depression symptom severity at various time points.

This was performed while using existing technology available through the electronic medical records and survey tools. All data capture tools were designed with input from clinicians, researchers and system administrators to ensure that the collection of program data could be completed in short amounts of time to minimize any potential burden on clinicians. Moreover, the systems were designed so that captured data could be easily extracted and analyzed to assist with program evaluation, HIMSS said.

As a result, the Road Home Program was able to improve access to evidence-based treatments for veterans with PTSD. Ongoing, data-driven program evaluation led to continuous improvements in program effectiveness.

According to research published by Road Home clinicians, clinical outcomes from the three-week-long intensive program demonstrate that the intensive program is highly effective and that participation in the program leads to large reductions in PTSD symptoms. In addition, program completion rates are much higher (91.5 percent) compared to standard outpatient PTSD treatment. Veterans also report very high satisfaction with the program and would recommend it to their veteran peers, HIMSS reported.

The organization was able to standardize the Road Home Program data-capture system and share it with other academic medical centers who offer similar programs for veterans with PTSD. As a result, PTSD programs and clinical outcomes can be directly compared to ensure that the veterans served receive the highest quality care possible, HIMSS explained.

Since it first began to offer intensive treatment services in 2015, the Road Home Program has closely tracked clinical outcomes and patient satisfaction through custom flowsheets in the electronic medical records and external survey tools. By continuously analyzing its program-based data – such as veterans' PTSD symptom improvement over the course of the program and at short, medium and long-term follow-up time points – the Road Home Program has been able to make changes to further increase effectiveness, HIMSS said.

The Davies Award

The HIMSS Davies Award of Excellence recognizes outstanding achievement of organizations that have used health information technology to substantially improve patient outcomes and value. The HIMSS Davies Award of Excellence is the pinnacle of the HIMSS Value Recognition Program and highlights organizations promoting health information and technology-enabled improvements in patient and business outcomes through sharing evidence-driven best practices on implementation strategies, workflow design, change management and patient engagement.

"Rush is proud to receive the HIMSS Davies Award of Excellence, as striving for excellence is the bedrock of everything we do at Rush," said Dr. Larry Goodman, CEO of Rush University Medical Center and the Rush System. "While this award symbolizes information technology achievement and expertise, we are especially proud that it also reflects the collective efforts by clinical, operational, and business teams to drive technology-enabled improvements for our patients."