eAppendix. Care Management Semi-Structured Interview Protocol

Introduction

Today we’d like to discuss with you the care you get from your primary care doctor’s office.¹

This interview is sponsored by the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) and is being conducted by separate organizations called Insight and Mathematica Policy Research. This interview is for a program your practice is participating in to try to improve medical care.

Your privacy is protected. All information that would let someone identify you or your family will be kept private. We will not share your personal information or responses to the interview today with anyone. The doctor’s office we ask about will not know your individual responses. Your responses are completely confidential.

Your participation is voluntary. You may choose to speak with me today or not. If you choose not to, this will not affect the health care you get or your insurance coverage. The interview should take about 45 minutes. To thank you for your time, we will send you a check for $25 as a token of our appreciation.

We’d like to tape this interview so that we can refer back to it for our analysis. Is that all right?

Do you have any questions before we begin?

Warm-Up Questions

1. How long have you been a patient at your primary care doctor’s office?

2. About how often do you make a visit to this doctor’s office?

3. Who is your primary care doctor?

4. Are there other people on the team at this practice that care for you?

   PROBE for each person they mention: What kinds of things does this person do for you?

5. There are many ways that patients and doctors can work together to manage a person’s health care. For example, some patients rely completely on their doctor to know what is best for them, while others like to take a more active role in the decisions that affect them. Would you say you take more of an active role or rely more on your doctor?

   PROBE: Do you ask questions and share your views about what you think is best for you, or do you prefer to rely on your doctor’s opinion?

¹ Since none of the deep-dive practices were led by nurse practitioners, we used a term most patients typically use: “your doctor’s office.”
6. Who at your doctor’s office talks to you about your condition or treatment options? *Probe them to list each person at the practice that discusses treatment options*
   a. *Probe for each person listed*: Do they talk to you about your condition in a way that is easy for you to understand?
   b. *Probe if respondent says hard to understand, ask:* How could they make it easier for you to understand?
   c. *Probe*: Who at the practice do you find easiest to understand? Tell me more about this.

General Questions about Doctor/Care Manager and Practice Team Involvement in Care

Care Planning and Patient Engagement

7. A plan of care (or care plan) is an agreement about how you and your health care providers are going to manage your health conditions. Have you and your primary care providers discussed a plan of care?
   *Probe*: If respondent doesn’t recognize the term ask:
   Do you have a care plan or description of your health care goals? (This usually includes identifying your health goals and how you are going to achieve them. It includes information on managing your conditions and medications.)

   [If the respondent doesn’t seem familiar with the term “plan of care” or “care plan,” please note that and skip Q8, and go to the next section on CARE MANAGEMENT]

8. At some practices, both the doctor and another person, like a nurse, work with the patient to (develop a plan of care) to help you manage your health problems.
   a. Who at the practice helped you develop this plan of care?
      *Probe*: Was this just one person or was more than one person involved?
   b. Has someone from the doctor’s office (or “this person,” if they are referring to someone in particular) given you a copy of your care plan?
   c. Is it a paper copy, or is it something you can view on the computer?

Care Management

The next few questions ask about how your primary care practice helps you to manage your care.

The term “care manager” is sometimes used to refer to the person from the primary care practice (or who works with your primary care practice) to check up with you on how you are doing. This contact with the care manager may occur during visits to your primary care doctor’s office, or by phone or email between visits. Sometimes it also includes visits to your home. This person might help you learn about managing your health conditions, or may follow up with you after you are discharged from a hospital. In some practices, this person may be a nurse or social worker. In other practices, it might be the primary care doctor.

9. Who is your care manager? (Probe beyond the person’s name to determine whether it’s the doctor/ nurse/ medical assistant or someone else).
If patient provides you with a name for their care manager: Cross check response with our list to see if it’s the same name provided by the primary care practice’s care manager. If not,

PROBE: Is [care manager name on MPR list] someone that helps with your care?

If given more than one name, ask: Of these people, who do you feel is more involved in helping you with your care over time?

[In remaining questions, refer to whichever of these two people the respondent says is more involved in their care.]

[If patient doesn’t know the name of says they don’t have a care manager]:

10. Thinking about the doctors, nurses and other staff in your primary care practice, who would you say is the person who seems to play this role of care manager?

PROBE: If you are not sure, let’s talk about some of the different people from your practice that you might see or talk with, and what each person typically does with you or for you.

[Interviewer will determine from these responses which is the care manager based on which person from the practice interacts most with the patient and which seems to be the one helping the patient to manage their chronic conditions over time, not just during office visits, but also between visits, e.g., by phone]

d. How were you introduced to ________? [Insert name/term patient used to refer to the care manager in response to Q10—Note: this may be a nurse, care manager, primary care physician, or medical assistant]

e. When did you begin working with [CARE MANAGER]?

f. How does the [CARE MANAGER] communicate with you? [PROBES: In-person at your provider’s office? Over the phone? By email?]

   i. How often do you talk with your [nurse] care manager?

g. What kinds of things does [NAME] help you with? (ASK FOR EXAMPLES)

   i. If you take medication, does the [nurse] care manager help you understand your medication(s)? Please tell me about that.

   ii. What were you told about when and how to contact your [care manager/nurse]?

h. How well does this person understand your needs? Tell me more about this.

i. Does s/he give you the opportunity to ask questions? Tell me more about this.

j. Does s/he ask you about your goals for your health and plan of care?

   i. If so, how did s/he do that?

   ii. What would you have liked him/her to have done differently (in addressing your goals)?

11. How involved would you say you are in making decisions about your health treatment plan?

12. How did s/he talk with you or your family about what to do if your symptoms worsen?
13. How well does the [CARE MANAGER] communicate with your primary care doctor about your care?
   
   k.  **PROBE:** Do they both seem to know what the other is doing for your care or not? Do they each let the other know when you need to see them or not?

   l.  **PROBE:** Do you consider the care manager a part of your primary care team?

14. What could your care manager do better to help you manage your health concerns?

15. What else could your doctor do better to help you manage your health concerns? *If the doctor is the care manager, do not ask this question*

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**Care Coordination**

Next, we want to get your opinions about how your care is handled when you need to seek care from someone outside of your primary care doctor’s office. For example, sometimes patients may need to see a specialist like a surgeon or heart doctor or a home health provider.

16. Does your primary care practice play a role in getting you to see a specialist like this if you need one?

   m. Can you walk me through the process by which you get referred to specialists?

      iii.  Who at the practice helped you with this?

      iv.   What do you like about this process?

      v.    What do you dislike about this process?

   n. Can you remember the first time your practice helped you in this way?

      **PROBE:** Was it always that way or was this a recent change in the past couple of years?

   o. Does your provider usually know the results of your visit with a specialist? **PROBE:** Do they refer to test or lab results or notes from the specialist during the next office visit?

   p. What could the practice do better to help you understand the care you receive from specialists?

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**Care Transitions**

17. Have you been to the hospital or the emergency department in the past six months? *If yes, ask Q18–20; if no, skip this section and go to Q21*

18. Which one did you have, an emergency room visit or a hospitalization? *If they say they went to the emergency room first and then got hospitalized from the ED, use the hospital term below*

19. Thinking about your **most recent** hospitalization/emergency department visit: Did someone at your primary care practice contact you to see how you were doing after your hospital stay/ED visit? If yes, ask:
q. Who contacted you from the practice? (If they don’t identify person’s role, then Probe: care manager, nurse, front desk, medical assistant, doctor.)

r. How did they contact you?
   vi. PROBE: By phone
   vii. PROBE: by home visit
   viii. PROBE: by email

s. What did they discuss with you during this contact?

t. Did they have you come in for an office visit?

u. What did they do that you found helpful?

20. Is there something your primary care doctor or his/her office could have helped you with after your hospital discharge/emergency department visit that they did not do?
   v. PROBE: Did you need help with your hospital discharge/ED instructions?
   w. PROBE: Did you have questions about your medications?
   x. PROBE: Did you have questions about conflicting advice from different doctors?

Changes at the Practice

21. Have you noticed any changes in how people at your doctor’s office support you or communicate with you over the past year or two?
   IF “YES” ASK: What changes have you noticed?
      When did you first notice the change?
      What do you think about these changes? [PROBE: What do you like about them? What are some things that you don’t like about them? Why?]

Thank you for taking the time to share your experiences with us today. This will help us to improve care for people like you.