

Kelsey-Seybold Clinic

WELL POSITIONED FOR THE FUTURE OF HEALTH CARE

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OVERVIEW

Affordable health care is top of mind for many Americans. In newspapers and on TV, there are many stories about people who could not afford the medical care needed when they or a loved one became ill. Much has been reported about the ability of organized systems of care, such as the Cleveland Clinic and Kelsey-Seybold Clinic, to reduce the overall cost of healthcare. Organized systems of care have been cited as models for the future of health care. Houston's largest, community-based multi-specialty group, Kelsey-Seybold Clinic, and groups like it are able to deliver high quality health care to patients at a lower cost than most medical practices. And, Houston area Medicare beneficiaries have the advantage of accessing this care through Medicare Advantage plans contracted with Kelsey-Seybold Clinic.

ORGANIZED SYSTEMS OF CARE

Through organized systems of care, individuals are able to access to affordable, quality health care. Organized systems of care include some of the most trusted names in health care, such as The Mayo Clinic, Kaiser-Permanente, the Geisinger Clinic, Scott and White Clinic, Intermountain Healthcare, and locally, Kelsey-Seybold Clinic. They are able to deliver high quality care at a lower cost because they focus on care coordination, evidence-based care practices, and effective use of information technology.

Recent studies strongly support the viewpoint that organized systems of care are a potential solution to the current health care crisis:

- The Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) announced results from the third-year Medicare Physician Group Practice (PGP) Demonstration on August 17, 2009, which revealed that all 10 participating multi-specialty physician groups saved Medicare \$32.2 million while improving health care outcomes.
- A 2009 report in the New York Times illustrated the findings from a study conducted by international benefits consulting firm Hewitt Associates, which concluded that integrated systems such as Kaiser Permanente “provided 22 percent greater cost efficiency than competing systems.”
- A similar benchmarking study in Houston described Kelsey-Seybold’s “KelseyCare” health benefits plan as the area’s most financially efficient plan. The plan demonstrated comparatively higher-quality measures along with lower overall costs, according to Hewitt Associates. Other independent studies have consistently scored KelseyCare higher on quality clinical outcomes and patient satisfaction.

BENEFITS OF KELSEY-SEYBOLD CLINIC

Kelsey-Seybold Clinic is an organized care delivery system that provides high quality medical care for a lower total cost than most medical practices. Kelsey-Seybold Clinic is able to deliver care to the patient more efficiently for a variety of reasons.

- **Evidence-based Medicine**

Kelsey-Seybold Clinic embraces a medical practice that follows an ethic of medical evidence. In layman's terms, if the treatment helps the patient, and if there is evidence or consensus that it helps the patient, then the physicians perform the treatment. If there is not evidence or agreement that the treatment will help the patient, then it is not performed. With evidence-based medical care, Kelsey-Seybold Clinic patients do not receive or pay for unnecessary tests, hospitalizations, surgeries or complications. This results in better health outcomes and lower out-of-pocket medical expenses for the patient.

- **Coordination of Care**

Costs are further reduced by Kelsey-Seybold's system of coordinated care and its use of a comprehensive electronic medical record. The electronic medical record provides a 360-degree view of the patient and includes information from all of the doctors the patient has seen at Kelsey-Seybold Clinic. In addition, the Kelsey-Seybold team uses case management, utilization management, medical surveillance, and a full range of care coordination to avoid duplicate efforts and make medical care more efficient. Within this type of system, the patient is more likely to see the right doctor for the right diagnosis and treatment, in the right setting at the right time. Correctly performing all of these steps from the beginning helps to lower costs while maintaining high quality care.

- **High Quality, Collaborative Care**

Kelsey-Seybold physicians have a 60-year tradition of delivering quality health care, based on collaboration among specialists trained in many different medical fields. Patients of Kelsey-Seybold Clinic have access to a collection of skilled specialists under one roof, with all of the diagnostic, therapeutic outpatient tools needed to correctly diagnose a patient and determine the proper course of treatment. Because the Kelsey-Seybold team coordinates care and shares responsibility, the possibility for gaps in care to occur is decreased. This model of care makes collaboration more common, because the interconnectivity of physicians working closely is fundamental to a group practice.

- **Preventive Services**

According to the U. S. Department of Health and Human Services, chronic diseases are the leading causes of death and disability in the United States. Eighty-five percent of the money spent on health care goes toward people with at least one chronic condition. Some of these conditions include diabetes, heart disease and obesity – conditions that are preventable. Kelsey-Seybold Clinic focuses on preventive care through health assessment and disease management programs, and works with patients who are at-risk for chronic diseases to help improve their conditions and control their out-of-pocket health care costs.

MEDICARE ADVANTAGE PLANS

Kelsey-Seybold Clinic has chosen to contract with Medicare Advantage plans because they are able to make the delivery of collaborative, efficient, patient-centered care a reality for Medicare-eligible patients. Under the traditional Medicare system of reimbursement, there is no funding for routine physicals (after the first 12 months of becoming eligible for Medicare), eye exams, hearing exams, hearing aids or general chiropractic procedures. The financing model of the Medicare Advantage program allows physicians at Kelsey-Seybold Clinic to manage the allocation of the Medicare funding to items such as physicals, preventive services, chronic disease management, and prevention of medical catastrophes, all of which improve patients' overall care. Enrolling in a Medicare Advantage plan contracted with Kelsey-Seybold Clinic is a good value for Medicare beneficiaries because it gives them access to Kelsey-Seybold Clinic's high level of coordinated care, all of its care delivery resources, as well as better coverage and fewer out-of-pocket health care costs.

Individuals enrolled in Medicare Advantage plans often do not pay deductibles and do not have the expensive premiums found in supplement insurance policies. And, those individuals enrolled in a Medicare Advantage plan with drug benefits do not have to spend additional money for a Part D plan because it is already included. Because of these benefits, more and more Medicare beneficiaries are enrolling in Medicare Advantage plans. Enrollment in Medicare Advantage products has doubled in the past five years, with more than 10.2 million Medicare beneficiaries enrolled. Texas ranks fifth in the nation in Medicare Advantage enrollment with over 492,000 Medicare-eligible Texans enrolled in a Medicare Advantage product.

CONCLUSION

Improving the nation's health care system is complex, with many variables to consider. Kelsey-Seybold Clinic's proven, organized system of care is a successful model for the nation because it offers a network of specialists who collaborate to provide high quality, evidence-based care while being accountable and controlling costs. By contracting with Medicare Advantage plans, Kelsey-Seybold Clinic is able to provide Medicare beneficiaries the ability to access this care at little or no cost. Accessing Kelsey-Seybold Clinic through a contracted Medicare Advantage plan is a system that delivers efficient, affordable, high quality medical care to Medicare beneficiaries and a system that is well positioned for the future of health care.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Spencer R. Berthelsen, M.D., F.A.C.P.

Spencer Berthelsen began his practice 28 years ago with the Kelsey-Seybold Clinic after completing his residency in Internal Medicine at the University of California at San Diego. He currently serves as the Chairman of the Board of Directors at Kelsey-Seybold Clinic. Kelsey-Seybold Clinic is a multi-specialty group practice comprised of more than 300 physicians in 18 locations throughout the greater Houston area.

Dr. Berthelsen has served in various leadership capacities within Kelsey-Seybold Clinic including Chairman of the Department of Internal Medicine, Medical Director for Primary Care, and Medical Director for Managed Care. His responsibilities include managing hospital and health plan relationships for the medical group as well as public advocacy and optimizing the performance of the Kelsey-Seybold practice. Dr. Berthelsen continues to maintain a general internal medicine practice at the Kelsey-Seybold Clinic Fort Bend location.

Dr. Berthelsen has also served two years as the chairman of the Texas Medical Association's Council on Legislation. During this time, effective Medical Liability Tort Reform was passed by the Texas Legislature and a constitutional amendment supporting reform was ratified by Texas voters. He is a Clinical Professor of Medicine at Baylor College of Medicine and The University of Texas Health Science Center at Houston.

Dr. Berthelsen is a graduate of Rice University with a Bachelor of Arts degree in Biology. He received his medical degree from Southwestern Medical School in Dallas.