Prevention is key in the fight against heart disease and stroke. By working to manage their hypertension, patients learn to live a healthier lifestyle and take steps to continue that lifestyle for years to come. The Sanford Webster Clinic helped facilitate one such step when they partnered with the South Dakota Department of Health Heart Disease and Stroke Prevention Program (HDSPP) in December 2021 to implement a self-measured blood pressure (SMBP) monitoring program.

Program goals were established and after receiving the blood pressure monitors, staff were able to move forward with enrolling patients. Initially, referrals were established during face-to-face visits with their provider. Once enrolled, the patient was contacted every two weeks (unless the provider requested more frequent contact) via phone to review their blood pressure readings. During their time in the program, patients received a loaner blood pressure monitor which they continued utilizing as long as the provider felt the patient should be in the program. Participation could range anywhere from a couple weeks to a month, or longer.

To simplify the enrollment process, each blood pressure (BP) monitor was placed in a small tote, along with pre-made packets for the patients containing all the necessary materials. These were placed in the outreach office at the clinic for easy to grab access and to make them easy to locate, the door was labeled as well.

Education packets included: information on how to take a blood pressure at home, education on controlling high blood pressure, an additional blood pressure pamphlet reviewing complications of high blood pressure and tips to lower blood pressure, a Better Choices, Better Health (chronic disease self-management program) pamphlet, RN contact number, and a home blood pressure log for the patients to record their blood pressure readings.

**Results**

Webster began enrolling participants in their program in March 2022. Prior to the end of their project period (June 30, 2022), they were able to enroll thirteen individuals in the program. Of those, four completed the program prior to the end of June. Six participants required medication changes throughout to meet their blood pressure goals and one participant was considered controlled, meaning no additional medication adjustments or treatment plan changes were needed.
Lessons Learned

Webster’s blood pressure machines were on back order when they first started developing their program, so they spent this additional time providing education to the staff. However, since it took even longer for the machines to arrive than expected, time had passed between when the project team initially educated the staff and when they received the equipment and were able to implement the program. To overcome this challenge, reminders were sent via email to the nursing staff and clinic providers, as well as additional education provided during staff meetings about the purpose of the new program and the steps to take to enroll a patient. This did eventually lead to an uptake in patient referrals for the program. There have now been referrals from several of the clinic providers, with one provider being a champion for the program.

One piece of advice Webster would give another community working on a similar project would be to research ways to implement the program and reach out to other facilities that have already put a program in place. To implement SMBP, make referrals at clinic visits, and continue utilizing the program for indicated patients, it is important to have good communication between the program leader and the rest of the team involved in enrolling patients in the program.

Pertinent Quotes

Webster staff noted, one of the exciting elements of the program was helping patients recognize hypertension early on, giving them the tools to help manage their diagnosis and hopefully implement a lifetime of management and disease prevention.

Next Steps

Webster will expand their SMBP program through their continued partnership with HDSPP in the 2022-2023 project period. During that time, they will continue to educate staff on the purpose of the program related to the prevention of heart disease and stroke. Additionally, the clinic will work to ensure sustainability for the program so it can be offered to the community for years to come.

Get Involved

For additional information on this project or to learn more about HDSPP funding opportunities, contact Rachel Sehr, Heart Disease and Stroke Prevention Coordinator at Rachel.Sehr@state.sd.us or 605-367-5356.

Contact:

Rachel Sehr, BSN, RN
Heart Disease and Stroke Prevention Coordinator
Rachel.Sehr@state.sd.us or 605-367-5356