Pro Bono patients are seen in health care systems and by policy rule, they cannot be turned away. The need for pro bono patients referred to physical therapy is increasing. At Concord Hospital, the percentage of pro bono patients increased from 2.8% in 2006 to 5% in 2010. A goal was identified to reduce the resources needed to provide care for pro bono patients in order to meet their clinical needs. Our mission is to continue to provide access to physical therapy treatment, while decreasing the cost to provide care.

When tracking referral and attendance statistics, we found that pro bono patients had a higher rate of noncompliance with scheduling a physical therapy appointment after provider referral (40%) compared to our insured population (20%). In addition, these patients had a higher same day no show/cancellation rate (39%) than our general population (16%). We understand there are complex social factors for many of these patients, and developed a model to remove barriers to access for care, minimize the systems resources and provide physical therapy at the same quality and level as non pro bono patients.

We chose to mirror a model commonly used by medical schools with physicians using medical students and/or residents to treat patients.

The end result has been to have one physical therapist work with 2-3 students and schedule 3 pro bono patients at the same time.

Primary Objectives
- Decrease resources needed to treat pro bono patients
- Provide the same quality care to pro bono patients as non-pro bono patients
- Remove barriers to access (no-par fee, accessible location)
- Provide the same access to physical therapy care
- Achieve same level of patient satisfaction to pro bono patients as non-pro bono patients
- Academic institution objectives included:
  - Provides service learning opportunities for physical therapy students
  - Provides diverse learning for students through experiences with multilingual, multicultural, and broad socioeconomic populations
  - Provides significantly more hands-on learning than other integrated clinical experiences

Describe the steps to implementation:
- Research and agree on the model of the pro bono clinic, which best meets the needs of the organization, academic institution, and patients
- Create a team of key stakeholders, including rehabilitation services outpatient physical therapy director, outpatient physical therapist staff at Concord Hospital, members of the academic institution (CCCE, program director), physicians, finance, and hospital administration
- Develop agreement with academic institution to provide students at needed times 52 weeks a year
- Budget for startup expenses
- Identify space (need to have access to public transportation)
- Identify physical therapist staff members with extensive experience in working with students and those a high level of engagement with this concept
- Agree on student rotation
- Create documentation standards that meet professional standards, but are less burdensome than those with payer requirements

**How long has it been in use within your organization?**
- 1.5 years

**Describe the benefit, challenges and barriers it has brought to your organization:**
- Same day cancellation/no show rate decreased to 23%
- Productivity for 3 therapists would have been 40% for same volume; now 1 therapist has productivity of 120%

**Improvements:**
- Maintained 1:1 treatment model
- Streamlined documentation
- Maintained same level of access to care
- Patient satisfaction scores similar to non pro bono patients
- Average visits per episode at 5.7 for pro bono patients vs 6.4 for non pro bono patients; difference is in higher no show for last visit

**Challenges:**
- Student rotation of 6 weeks was too short, now increasing to 10-week rotation
- Staggering of rotations of students so they do not all end at the same time
- Having patients accept traveling further to free clinic vs a clinic closer to home
- Student availability
- Limited space if volume increases
- Limited time availability of students
- Continued improvement of compliance with attendance

**Evidence\justification to support this practice:**
Concord Hospital’s mission statement is to be a charitable organization, which exists to meet the health needs of individuals within the communities it serves. Our goal is to provide the same high level of care to pro bono patients in a cost-efficient manner. As noted by patient results, patient satisfaction, and staff efficiency, we believe we meet the goal of providing high-level patient care in a cost-effective manner.

Productivity of therapists demonstrates that the goal of cost efficiency is met.

We believe this model is reproducible in health care systems that have a physical therapy school in their community.

**Assessment Tools:**
N/A

**Direct evidence as a result of this practice:**
N/A

**Are you willing to share this with others, and is there a cost associated?**
- This was a presentation to physical therapy educators at a meeting in the fall of 2012
- Will be presenting at CSM 2014
Patient satisfaction scores:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Key Questions</th>
<th>% rating as:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>“Were you treated with respect, courtesy, and your individual needs in mind?”</td>
<td>100% excellent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“How confident were you in the ability and knowledge of your therapists?”</td>
<td>100% excellent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“How would you rate the overall effectiveness of your therapy?”</td>
<td>75% excellent (25% good)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“How would you rate your overall experience?”</td>
<td>100% excellent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Would you recommend our services to others?”</td>
<td>100% excellent</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Contact for additional information:

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