



American College of Cardiology Aims for PHM



The American College of Cardiology has added population health management (PHM) to its five-year strategic plan, indicating its resolve to further strengthen efforts with PHM. In fact, the ACC also formed a committee to address policy and health promotion surrounding population health.

The College is looking to tackle cardiovascular disease as part of its PHM efforts, and to do that members are focusing on the use of big data, quality improvement measures, patient advocacy and more, according to Gerard Martin, MD, chairman of the ACC Population Health Policy and Health Promotion Committee.

Today, many providers seek to implement PHM strategies that focus on prediction and prevention instead of delivering reactionary services. This trend creates opportunities for specialist organisations like ACC to help with collaborating and educating stakeholders on the importance of preventative care.

"The global burden of cardiovascular disease is expected to increase by 57 percent by the year 2020. The number of people impacted by heart disease is increasing," Dr. Martin points out. "This is a very important time to talk about the prevention of heart disease and health promotion. Yes, it's a problem in the United States, and it's a problem in Europe, but it's a much bigger problem in low- and middle-income countries that aren't used to dealing with chronic disease."

The ACC has been engaged in population health over the last few years, he says, noting that "several members of our Presidential team have been working either directly with the World Health Organization or with the World Heart Federation on the efforts to address the increasing burden of cardiovascular disease that's occurring globally."

According to Dr. Martin, improved interoperability is necessary to facilitate data sharing during population health efforts.

"We know that data registries and health information exchange is critical for understanding this issue, but there are still so many data silos that are preventing meaningful work from getting done," he says. "The data sits in different buckets [eg, EHR or clinic's registration area] ... and none of it is tied together."

There is also a great need for unique patient identifiers, Dr. Martin says, because cardiovascular disease begins in childhood and it would be very beneficial to have the data follow them throughout their lives.

"There's a lot of data in paediatrics that could inform on what's going on in the adult arena," he notes. "So I think a unique patient identifier and greater connectivity between data sets would all be huge benefits."

Hospitals and health system CIOs have recently stressed the need for patient identifiers, including in comments sent to the Office of the National Coordinator for Health IT on its proposed interoperability roadmap.

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