

Florida Alliance for Healthcare Value 38th Annual Meeting of the Board of Directors Highlights New Efforts to Enhance Healthcare Access and Outcomes

On March 29th, the Florida Alliance for Healthcare Value held its 38th Annual Meeting of the Board of Directors as an online event. Ann-Marie Sharpe, ARM-P, 2021-2022 Florida Alliance Board Chair and Director of Risk Management for the City of Miami called the meeting to order.

Healthcare Hero Award Presentation

Patrick Peters, Board Member from Orange County Government and Healthcare Advisory Council Member Cheri Carrick from AdventHealth presented the “Dr. Jack Mahoney Healthcare Hero” award to the Honorable Jerry L. Demings, Orange County Mayor. This award is given annually by the Florida Alliance Board of Directors in honor of its Medical Director and thought partner, Dr. Jack Mahoney, to an individual who leads an initiative that results in significant improvement of health for Floridians. Mayor Demings was recognized for his call to action for Central Florida in leading a comprehensive and intensive evaluation of the system of care for mental and behavioral health over the past year, engaging a wide array of stakeholders in the community to identify gaps and opportunities, and generating a series of recommendations that were approved by the County Commissioners in late February 2022.

Keynote Presentation: Social Determinants of Health and Their Impact on the Employee Healthcare Experience

National Patient Advocate Foundation and Patient Advocate Foundation CEO Alan Balch, PhD, delivered the keynote address and highlighted the role case management and patient navigation can play in addressing social determinants of health (SDOH) for employees diagnosed with chronic, life-threatening, or debilitating illnesses.

Balch shared that despite the best efforts of employers to educate their plan members about the healthcare programs and services available to them, it is common to find that employees and their family members do not understand how to use their benefits from the beginning of a diagnosis and as they progress through treatment, they can wind up in a downward financial spiral. This economic turmoil, which is often compounded by SDOH, disrupts their health care, negatively impacting health outcomes as well as return to work.

“What we’ve learned is that there are a series of roadblocks that get in the way of patients accessing care and achieving the health outcomes we all desire,” said Balch. “By surfacing these issues and intervening early on in a patient’s diagnosis and healthcare journey, we can help them navigate their existing benefits and connect them, if needed, to additional resources that will ease their burden. Without intervention, care disruptions can preclude employers from achieving the maximum return on investment for the benefits they offer.”

Balch highlighted the top needs of patients served by the Patient Advocate Foundation in the past year, which included assistance with the following:

- Healthcare costs
- Utilities
- Housing
- Transportation
- Nutrition
- Disability
- Insurance

He also explained the emergence of “Z codes,” a new diagnostic tool to help identify patients with potential health hazards related to socioeconomic and psychosocial circumstances. Provided in ICD-10-CM, these codes can be used for reporting factors influencing health status and contact with health services:

Z55 = Problems related to education and literacy

Z56 = Problems related to employment and unemployment

Z57 = Occupational exposure to risk factors

Z59 = Problems related to housing and economic circumstances

Z60 = Problems related to social environment

Z62 = Problems related to upbringing

Z63 = Other problems related to primary support group, including family circumstances

Z64 = Problems related to certain psychosocial circumstances

Z65 = Problems related to other psychosocial circumstances

While these are currently “no-pay” codes and not yet officially deployed by CMS, Balch shared that some health systems and pharmacies are starting to build them into their infrastructure. Several SDOH screening tools have also become available. He believes this more formalized system will help improve identification of patients who could benefit from care navigation assistance.

“Surfacing these issues early in a medical journey helps the highest need patients get off on the right first step,” said Balch. “Needs navigation is really about providing people with greater access to the resources and care they need, and it moves us toward a more equitable health system.”

Employee Benefits Advocate Program

After Balch’s presentation, Florida Alliance for Healthcare Value President and CEO Karen van Caulil, PhD, shared information about the Employee Benefits Advocate Program (formerly the Cancer Navigation Program), a partnership with the Patient Advocate Foundation. Available to Florida Alliance employer members this program helps employees experiencing cancer, a rare disease, or complex chronic condition overcome practical, emotional, social, and financial barriers by providing them with

compassionate navigation, effective intervention, and proactive benefit education. You can learn more about this program on the Florida Alliance web site.

Additional Business

The Annual Meeting concluded with a presentation of the 2021 Annual Report and 2022 Plan of Work along with installation of the 2022-2023 Board of Directors and Officers of the Corporation. Heather Russo, Director of Healthcare Administration for The Walt Disney Company, will serve as the new Board Chair.

The Florida Alliance for Healthcare Value thanks the following Annual Meeting sponsors for making this event possible: AdventHealth, Novo Nordisk, and Pfizer.

Please save the date for the Florida Alliance's 29th Annual Conference which will be held in person on Friday, June 17, 2022, at the Rosen Centre Hotel in Orlando.