

MEDICAL COLLEGE OF WISCONSIN SCHOOL OF PHARMACY STUDENT WRITING CLUB:

Business Member Spotlight: Bread of Healing Clinic

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The Bread of Healing Clinic laid its foundation 20 years ago when a parish nurse and a medical resident developed a clinic to serve the uninsured population of Milwaukee. Many patients at their previous workplace, Mt. Sinai, had chronic medical conditions that were undiagnosed and therefore untreated. The Bread of Healing Clinic is now a medical “home” to the many uninsured people of Milwaukee County. Their goal is to provide high-quality primary, specialty, and tertiary care to patients with chronic conditions who are challenged due to socioeconomic constraints. Through their interdisciplinary practice care model, which includes social workers, nurses, dentists, pharmacists, physicians, nutritionists, and many other healthcare professionals, they aim to practice patient-centered care through institutional incorporations.

The Bread of Healing Clinic is entirely volunteer based. All healthcare providers at the clinic are volunteers who enjoy sharing their skills and time. Generally, in the current COVID-19 era, a new patient is seen via a telehealth visit. Telehealth calls usually run between 45 minutes and an hour, but the length is unlimited to ensure that patients get the thorough workup and care they need without feeling rushed. After the initial telehealth visit, a patient is typically scheduled for an in-person appointment at the clinic a few days later.

Besides having access to a doctor and pharmacist, patients also have access to social workers. The only requirement for receiving care at the clinic is a lack of insurance. Most patients are usually in a transient situation with insurance coverage, or are on BadgerCare. Social workers meet with each patient to discuss how they can best overcome barriers to care. After the first appointment, there are follow-up visits 28 days later to see whether the chronic

conditions are managed or need additional assistance.

For the Bread of Healing team, every morning includes a huddle during which they can review and discuss each patient chart. In fact, the process of profile review starts even before the patient steps into the clinic, approximately a week in advance. Each appointment has a sticky note associated with it, which summarizes how the clinic can help personalize care and what providers should focus on.

If needed, medications can be prescribed at the end of the patient’s appointment. The pharmacist helps with patient care by walking patients through all their medications and providing medication counseling. Pharmacists work closely with other providers to discuss medications.

Everyone at the clinic is on a first-name basis, and the floorplan of the space invites collaboration and openness, with a goal of encouraging conversation and brainstorming.

Raising the Bar

The Bread of Healing Clinic isn’t strictly a pharmacy; it is a clinic where pharmacists practice as a part of an interprofessional healthcare unit. The practice setting is akin to a dispensary. Physicians delegate medication-related decisions and tasks to the pharmacy, thereby broadening and expanding the role and responsibilities of the pharmacists. With the established collaborative practice agreement under medical regulatory guidance, pharmacists may add or change medication doses, perform therapeutic substitutions, make medication initiation suggestions, and many other medication-related tasks.

Though there is no specific training provided to pharmacy volunteers, morning huddles are organized to help

them familiarize themselves with the patient details. Pharmacists are proactive throughout patient appointments. Pharmacists interpret labs alongside physicians and offer their health management solutions. The open communication helps engage volunteering student pharmacists to contribute their perspectives as well.

The Bread of Healing Clinic believes that touching base with each patient is essential. Therefore, they are committed to following up with patients every 30 days; this is the biggest factor in making the practice successful. This follow-up helps increase medication adherence. To maintain the high compliance in the community, the clinic arranges for a pill box or tablet splitters to be given, as the provision of these supplies help with patient adherence.

Bumps in the Road

As with most organizations, the Bread of Healing Clinic has encountered its share of challenges. A recurring challenge this clinic sees is patients cycling in and out of the Medicaid system. It is common for a patient to attend the clinic while they are uninsured for six months, and then become ineligible for six months while they have insurance. While this creates difficulties with care continuity, as patients might go somewhere different for care, it is essential that the clinic remains within its capacity limits and creates space for other patients who are eligible to receive care.

Another challenge the Bread of Healing Clinic faces is finding ways for patients to appropriately take medications within economic limitations. For example, there is a portion of the patient population who, on average, eat one meal per day. This might affect medication efficacy when a given medication needs to be taken consistently with a meal. A patient might be prescribed

insulin with a regimen that requires three doses per day, but the patient eats only one meal (or no meals) a day. The clinic approaches these challenges by working to understand each patient's situation, creating individualized medication therapy plans, and referring patients to additional local agencies to help with meeting these needs.

In addition to year-round challenges, adapting to COVID-19 presented unique difficulties. The Bread of Healing Clinic adjusted workflows, through the implementation of telehealth, to minimize in-person contact. For a nonprofit organization, telehealth was a large capital expense that required additional funding through a six-month grant. The employee demand increased more than 15 hours per week with the implementation of telehealth, and it is estimated to require three times as much work as having patients on site. Although telehealth has increased employee demand at the clinic, it proved to be a quick and successful solution to navigating the difficulties that COVID-19 presented.

Moving Forward

In the future, the Bread of Healing Clinic plans to grow by providing its patients with influenza and pneumonia vaccinations. The implementation of these vaccination services will bring additional workload, so the clinic will see a need to reorganize workflows. The clinic intends to

The Bread of Healing Clinic is a neighborhood-based clinic for individuals with financial or other barriers to quality health care. We commit ourselves to respect, love, and learn from the people we serve believing that the atmosphere we create reflects Jesus' healing ministry.

use vaccine-certified student pharmacists for administration and integrating the required 15-minute post-vaccination wait time into their workflow. The clinic plans on offering immunizations to patients upon entry into the clinic, prior to other services provided, to enhance efficiency. The implementation of these immunization services, as well as the recent implementation of telehealth, will require additional funding from sponsoring donors.

Prospective patients can find the Bread of Healing Clinic by dialing 211 on a telephone and asking for a list of free clinics. The Bread of Healing Clinic is near the top of the list, and they are open five days per week among three locations. Additionally, the Bread of Healing Clinic is a resource for hospital emergency departments. Local emergency departments have access to patient scheduling and can set up appointments for patients directly through the Bread of Healing Clinic's scheduling system.

To keep its doors open for uninsured patients, the Bread of Healing Clinic relies heavily on its volunteer staff and funding from donors to remain sustainable. The clinic's interdisciplinary set-up and practice, along with patient follow-ups every 30 days, continues to improve patient care and medication adherence/efficacy. While the Bread of Healing Clinic has its share of obstacles, the clinic continually works to overcome these challenges by maintaining its goal of providing high-quality, patient-centered care.

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