COVID-19 Pandemic: Impacts on Primary Care

/ Diane Rittenhouse, MD, MPH
/ Senior Fellow, Mathematica
/ Professor, University of California, San Francisco

/ DRittenhouse@mathematica-mpr.com
/ @dianerittenhous
Primary Care … in Crisis

/ Family Medicine, General Internal Medicine, and General Pediatrics
/ First contact care
/ Relationship-centered
/ Foundation of high-quality, low-cost, equitable health care system

/ Transformation for > 10 years
/ Chronically under-resourced
  - Financial investment
  - Fee-for-service payment
  - Human resources - workforce
  - Technical assistance
Data are presented as a percentage change in the number of visits of any type (in-person and telemedicine) in a given week from the baseline week (March 1–7).

Routine childhood immunizations

* VFC data represent the difference in cumulative doses of VFC-funded noninfluenza and measles-containing vaccines ordered by health care providers at weekly intervals between Jan 7–Apr 21, 2019, and Jan 6–Apr 19, 2020.

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Data are presented as a percentage, with the numerator being the number of telemedicine visits in a given week and the denominator being the number of visits in the baseline week (March 1–7). Telemedicine includes both telephone and video visits.

Primary Care Providers Speak:

- The "I can do 4-6 weeks of this" transition to "this feels like a new/permanent normal" is crushing and demoralizing. Ways to build morale when everyone is at a computer workstation away from other staff (and patients) feels impossible. (Ohio)

- I am seeing a counselor regularly, and clearly have compassion fatigue. Pain from the daily treadmill, crying because of the broken system locally and fractured national disaster, knowing how different it could be. (Virginia)

- March-June the stress level was constant and severe. I had a physical and emotional meltdown in June and had to take a week off. Emotional exhaustion has also been affected by a physician colleague's suicide in May. (Oregon)

Small independent primary care practice revenue needs to be stabilized

Primary Care investment needs to increase

Transition to population-based prospective payment (capitation) for primary care

Telehealth is here to stay – need to support with $ and TA

Primary care practices need both financial support and human support to continue to serve and continue to transform