

Improving Patient Access to Timely Genetic Services

Integrating Genetic Services and Primary Care

The Problem

- With significant progress in expanding and improving access and knowledge around genetic services, as well as rapid advances both in clinical practice and technological innovation, serious gaps remain in the delivery of genetic services to medically underserved populations. Mostly, these gaps can be attributed to disparities in the distribution of medical genetic workforce (i.e., medical genetics professionals tend to be found in urban areas and/or academic medical centers) and limited or complete lack of health insurance reimbursement for genetic testing and counseling. To bridge these gaps, improving the integration of genetic services with primary care has been singled out as a priority, as primary care often serves as the only access point for many patients to receive care, especially in rural areas where there is a shortage of medical professionals.

The Opportunity

- This project aims to engage and integrate primary care, home-visitors, and family support organizations to create new or enhance existing pathways to genetics services. This research project will help us gain a better understanding of the best approach to achieve this integration in Oklahoma primary care practices and in a rural state like Oklahoma.
- Interested clinicians will receive material and technical support and training to facilitate connections to genetic services.
- The process of integrating genetic services into primary care will be improved based on periodic evaluation of physician utilization of these tools and feedback. Findings from the process evaluation will inform the development and implementation of additional resources to support primary care practices.
- Practices can contribute to this study in two ways: (1) Clinicians can volunteer to be interviewed for about 30 minutes for one phase of the study to discuss their roles in patient-centered medical home for patients with genetic conditions (e.g., children with special health care needs; and (2) Practices can sign up to receive telegenetics equipment with support and track patients who receive genetic services via telehealth.

Eligibility

- Primary care clinicians who would like greater access to specialists and additional resources/support in genetics.
- We are recruiting up to 10 clinicians from OKPRN who are representative of primary care practices throughout the state.

Benefits of Participation

- Participating clinicians will receive telehealth equipment and training as well as connection to a geneticist.
- Clinicians can elect to receive educational and implementation resources that are developed by the project.
- Practices will have the opportunity to meaningfully contribute to understanding the process of integrating genetics into primary care.
- Practices may receive support from a practice facilitator (PEA) who will provide hands-on implementation and tailoring assistance throughout the study.



Would you like your patients to have ready access to genetic services?

This project may be for you!

- Recruitment is currently ongoing
- Selected practices will receive telehealth equipment and training
- Please see <https://www.heartlandcolaborative.org/> for more details

This project is funded by the Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) and a collaboration between the University of Oklahoma Health Sciences Center and University of Arkansas for Medical Sciences.

The University of Oklahoma is an equal opportunity institution.

IRB #9480