

Chapter 7

Clinical Practice Guidelines

Overview

This chapter covers South Country Health Alliance (SCHA) Clinical Practice Guidelines.

Clinical Practice Guidelines

- Preventive Services for Adults Guideline
- Preventive Services for Children Guidelines
- Prenatal, Routine Care Guideline
- Diabetes, Type 2 Management Guideline
- Asthma, Diagnosis and Management Guideline
- Hypertension Diagnosis and Treatment

Clinical Practice Guidelines Overview

Clinical Practice Guidelines are systematically developed statements on medical practices that help a health care practitioner make decisions about appropriate health care for specific medical conditions for their patients. SCHA adopts and disseminates clinical practice guidelines to:

- enhance patient and practitioner clinical decision-making
- improve health care, and
- reduce unnecessary variation in the health care delivery system.

SCHA adopts guidelines to assist health care practitioners in recommended courses of intervention, including possible treatment options. Clinical Practice Guidelines are not a substitute for the advice of a physician or other knowledgeable health care practitioners or providers. Guidelines are one of the tools used in identifying areas of clinical improvement.

Clinical practice guidelines are accepted from nationally or community-based recognized sources. The primary source for these guidelines is the Institute for Clinical Systems Improvement (ICSI). ICSI is a community-based organization which develops and adopts clinical practice guidelines with involvement from community-based physicians and other appropriate health care professionals. The guidelines are based on reasonable medical evidence or a consensus on clinical treatment patterns by physicians in the selected field of practice. If ICSI does not have a guideline for the desired topic, SCHA may choose to review and adopt guidelines from other sources

such as medical specialty societies and other professional organizations that develop guidelines.

Each year, the Quality Assurance Committee reviews existing guidelines in consultation with contracting health care professionals, identifies and adopts new guidelines, and determines priority guidelines based on relevance for each of South Country's populations that include preventive and chronic disease practice guidelines that are appropriate for seniors age 65 years and older and consistent with accepted geriatric practices and persons with disabilities. On an annual basis, practice guideline measurement data are used to assess if desired outcomes are being achieved.

SCHA and its delegates apply these guidelines to decisions for utilization management, member education, coverage of services, and other areas to which there is application and consistency with the guidelines. SCHA also uses practice guidelines to evaluate the appropriateness, cost-effectiveness, and medical necessity of care by looking at the processes and outcomes of patient care.

The format of SCHA practice guidelines includes the primary source with a direct link to ICSI's online content for each clinical practice guideline.

Currently, SCHA has 6 priority clinical practice guidelines:

1. Preventive Services for Adults
Primary Source: Institute for Clinical Systems Improvement
http://www.icsi.org/guidelines_and_more/gl_os_prot/preventive_health_maintenance/preventive_services_for_adults/preventive_services_for_adults_11.html
2. Preventive Services for Children and Adolescents
Primary Source: Institute for Clinical Systems Improvement
http://www.icsi.org/guidelines_and_more/gl_os_prot/preventive_health_maintenance/preventive_services_for_children_guideline/preventive_services_for_children_and_adolescents_762.html
3. Prenatal Care, Routine
Primary Source: Institute for Clinical Systems Improvement
http://www.icsi.org/guidelines_and_more/gl_os_prot/womens_health/prenatal_care_4/prenatal_care_routine_3.html

4. Diabetes, Type 2
Primary Source: Institute for Clinical Systems Improvement (ICSI)
http://www.icsi.org/guidelines_and_more/gl_os_prot/other_health_care_conditions/diabetes_mellitus_type_2/diabetes_mellitus_type_2_management_of_6.html

5. Asthma
Primary Source: Institute for Clinical Systems Improvement
http://www.icsi.org/guidelines_and_more/gl_os_prot/respiratory/asthma_outpatient/asthma_diagnosis_and_outpatient_management_of_12572.html

6. Hypertension Diagnosis and Treatment
Primary Source: Institute for Clinical Systems Improvement
http://www.icsi.org/guidelines_and_more/gl_os_prot/cardiovascular/hypertension_4/hypertension_diagnosis_and_treatment_11.html

SCHA educates members about current practice guideline recommendations through member newsletters, health promotion, disease management, and performance improvement project materials. Priority practice guidelines are made available on South Country's web site and sent to members and potential members upon request.

Periodically, and as updated, these guidelines will be disseminated through the Provider Page at www.mnscha.org and *Provider Network News*, health promotion, disease management program, and performance improvement project provider communications.