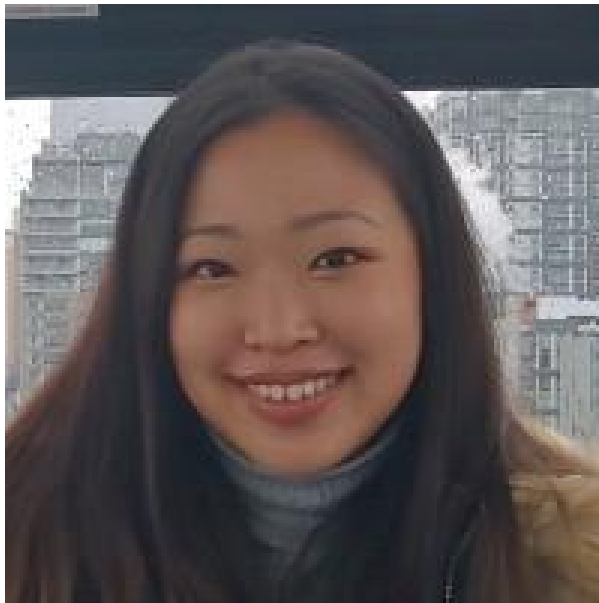




Inside Population Health **Healthy Holidays**



Elizabeth Pak, PMP, Director, Community Connect, Population Health



Welcome to *Inside Population Health*. December ushers in the holidays—and reminders about good health and hygiene. Last week was National Influenza Week and this week, National Handwashing Awareness Week. We offer flu shot best practices in both our “Meet the Measures” and pharmacy sections.

Unfortunately, holidays and/or cold and dark days can also bring on feelings of depression and social isolation. We provide HCC coding tips on depression and the importance of meditation for our pediatric patients. For our geriatric patients, read on for our Annual Wellness Visit best practices in the "Innovative Office" area. You will also find a patient health equity survey on maternal health disparities. And finally, we have a new section covering hospice myths.

Introducing the Population Health Community Connect Department

Community Connect provides community practices with a cost-effective, operationally efficient, and regulatory-compliant EHR solution. The program includes all functionality of Sentara's instance of Epic including Cadence for scheduling, Prelude for registration, Resolute for billing, MyChart for patient engagement, and much more. By participating in Community Connect, practices enhance their ability to meet population health goals, participate in value-based care initiatives, increase value-based care revenue, and streamline data sharing.

A few goals for 2025:

- Promote the SQCN Community Connect program and identify if Epic is the right tool for your practice.
- Highlight Epic's data sharing capabilities as a significant tool for practices to meet your value-based care goals.
- Support change management and practice empowerment through detailed project implementation plans.

As 2024 is coming to an end, we are working with interested community partners on embracing change and innovative technology to enhance patient care. As most changes can be daunting, Community Connect is dedicated to guiding you throughout every step so that when change comes, we are ready.

Based on your SQCN quality performance and engagement, you may qualify to have as much as 85% of your implementation or 75% of ongoing maintenance costs covered by Sentara Health. Our dedicated Community Connect team is here to help you and your practice and answer any questions. Feel free to reach out to our team and we look forward to discussing more.

Please note that we no longer have a partnership with Pyx Health. If your patients have the Pyx Health app, they will automatically be transferred to a complimentary membership.

Happy holidays!

Innovative Office: Annual Wellness Visits

The Annual Wellness Visit (AWV) program is a key component of preventive healthcare under Medicare. It's designed to improve patient health outcomes, mitigate health risks early, and reduce long-term costs. [Dr. Christian Iudica](#) at [Harrisonburg Family Practice \(HFP\)](#) has partnered with our network on an AWV RN-led visit program and has seen a significant increase in AWV completion rates.

The innovative team-based approach includes an additional AWV liaison who helps educate patients on the importance of initial and subsequent AWVs, knowledge of what to expect during the visit, and appointment confirmation two days prior. This liaison also maintains and reviews patient lists. If a patient cancels their AWV, HFP fills them with eligible members provided by the Sentara Population Health team. They also schedule patients for their annual follow-up.

Since implementation, HFP has noted a 40% increase in the number of AWV's completed and charged in 2024.

The AWV program focuses on personalized prevention plans based on the patient's health and risk factors. The patient volume depends on practice size, but all include all Medicare Part B and Medicare Advantage patients eligible for AWVs. Further considerations include:

- **Duration:** Visits typically last 20–60 minutes, depending on patient complexity.
- **Structure:** Varies depending on the patient.
 - **Initial Visit (IPPE or "Welcome to Medicare Visit"):** Baseline health assessment for new enrollees.
 - **Subsequent AWVs:** Annual updates to health risk assessments, preventive screenings, and care plans.

A SQCN licensed staff member can help complete AWV, TCM, and CCM services for your SQCN attributed patients, improving your practice performance while increasing your billing revenue. It also opens the clinician's schedule for more complex visits and higher quality care. Here is a [tip sheet you can give your patients on the importance of AWVs.](#)

Interested in finding out more about the AWW program for your practice? [Reach out to us](#) for more information on how we can help your patients. Additional resources available include diabetes care and education specialists, care managers, care coordinators, clinical pharmacists, and social workers.

Upcoming Meetings

- The **Adult PCPC** meeting is December 19 from 6-7 p.m.
- The **Pediatric PCPC** meeting is cancelled this month.
- The **SACO Primary Care Leadership** meeting is December 20 from 7-8 a.m.
- The **Practice Managers** meeting is cancelled this month.

[2024 SCHEDULE](#)

Impact Scorecards

Avoidable ED visits (rate per 1,000) remain as our utilization metric and there are several quality metrics for adult and pediatric populations. These metrics are scored for each practice and the total score is expressed as a percentage from 30-100%. That performance score will be combined with attribution to determine distributions. The report is updated monthly so that you can track your practice's performance.

[LINK TO SCORECARD](#)

Meet the Measures: Flu shot

The flu shot is an important annual preventive measure for almost all of your patients. The CDC increased risk list includes those under 2 and those over 65, as well as those with chronic illnesses, higher BMI, and weakened immune systems.

For your patients with diabetes, there are particular recommendations:

- Injectable flu shots are recommended over the nasal spray flu vaccine.

- Having the flu can increase pneumococcal disease risk. This can cause death.
- Everyday preventive actions like avoiding those who are sick, washing hands, and covering coughs may help.

If you think your patient can benefit from diabetes self-management services, [please share this tip sheet](#). [Reach out to us](#) for additional support from our diabetes educators, care managers, care coordinators, clinical pharmacists, and social workers.

Pharmacy Highlights: Flu prevention and treatment

All flu vaccines in the United States for the 2024-2025 season are trivalent. The trivalent vaccines are formulated to protect against Type A and B viruses, an A (H1N1) virus, an A (H3N2) virus, and a B/Victoria lineage virus.

- FluMist is a live attenuated nasal spray approved for healthy non-pregnant patients aged 2-49.
- Fluzone High Dose and Fludax are approved for adults 65+.
- Flublok is approved for patients 18+.

Treatment options

Influenza antiviral medications can lessen symptoms, shorten the time patients are sick, and reduce some complications. The CDC recommends treatment within 24-48 hours of the onset of symptoms. Click on the button below for a table with treatment options for adults.

[FLU TREATMENT OPTIONS AND RESOURCES](#)

Clean hands count

It's handwashing week. Here's a fact: Healthcare providers might need to clean their hands as many as 100 times per 12-hour shift, depending on the number of patients and intensity of care. Know what it could take to keep your patients safe. See more [information from the CDC here](#).



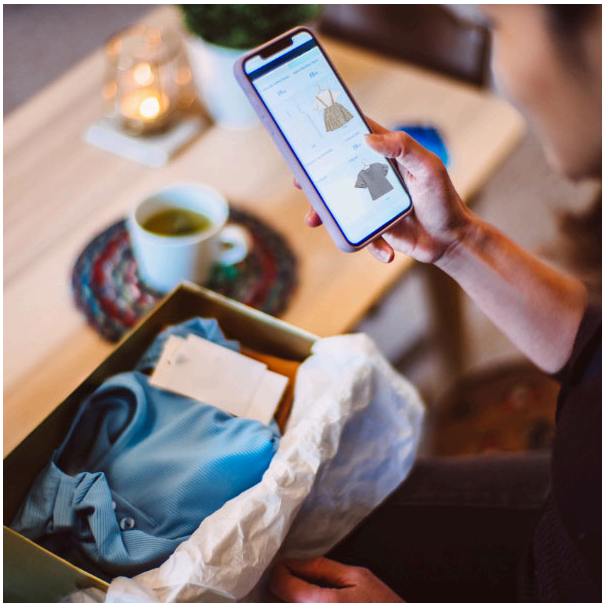
Maternal health help

The Consortium for Infant and Child Health (CINCH) is a community-based coalition working to eliminate black maternal care disparities through empowerment, advocacy, provider accountability, and healthcare system changes.

[Read more.](#)

Kids and meditation

Last month, [Dr. Joel Brenner](#) presented on "Mind and Body Wellness" to the Pediatric PCPC. Find his presentation on the [CHKD mindfulness program here](#), including tools and resources for pediatric athletes and patients, adults, and you.



Holiday blues

December can be hard for many patients. In addition to depression screening and [coping tips](#), ask:

- What winter/holiday activities do you enjoy?
- How do you keep active when the weather is colder?
- Any changes in your sleep?

Hospice Myth of the Month

Myth: Hospice is for when there is no hope.

Fact: When death is in sight, there are two options: submit without hope or live life as fully as ever until the end.

The gift of hospice is its capacity to help families see how much can be shared at the end of life through personal and spiritual connections often left behind. It is no wonder that many family members can look back upon their

hospice experience with gratitude, and with the knowledge that everything possible was done towards a peaceful death.

Source: [Sentara Hospice Services](#)

HCC Coding Tips: Major depressive disorder

Major depression (F33.XX) may be controlled with medications. Depression is considered "major" if 5 or more of the following symptoms present over a 2-week period of time utilizing the PHQ-9 screening tool:

1. Depressed mood
2. Diminished interest in activities
3. Weight loss
4. Weight gain
5. Insomnia
6. Hypersomnia
7. Agitation
8. Feeling of low self-esteem
9. Guilt or feeling of worthlessness
10. Frequently tearful or brooding
11. Excessive worry
12. Diminished ability to concentrate
13. Recurrent thoughts of death
14. Suicidal ideation OR suicide attempt

See the button below for the coding tables. Contact our [HCC coding team](#) with any questions.

HCC MAJOR DEPRESSION CODING TABLES

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