Quality Measure: Screening for Depression, and Documenting a Follow-Up Plan

Depression screening remains one of the quality measures for Prima CARE in 2019. Although the quality measure requires screening only once a year, given the prevalence of depression in primary care, more frequent screening certainly makes sense.

The PHQ-2 smartform is opened from the smartform dropdown at the upper left corner of the progress note – now called “PHQ2 (2015 Edition)”.

Any score above 0 on the PHQ-2 requires that a PHQ-9 smartform be completed (note that if the PHQ-2 is > 1, then the PHQ-9 smartform opens automatically).

If the PHQ-9 is less than 9 (a score of 0 to 8), no further documentation needs to be done (though further assessment of a patient with a lower PHQ-9 score may be clinically indicated based upon the provider's impression).
For a PHQ-9 score of 9 or greater, a plan of action needs to be documented in the Quality Measures sub-folder of the Preventive Medicine folder.

Select “Positive” from the first item on the form. Selecting the box next to “Suicide Risk Assessment Performed” enters the current date. I don't like most of the choices in the “Follow-Up for Depression” dropdown, and usually just leave it as “Patient follow-up to return when and if necessary”. I then go back to the progress note and document what I am really doing for the patient – medication, referral for counseling, or nonpharmacological suggestions - and definitely a follow-up visit in whatever time frame I think the symptoms warrant.

I was told in the past that simply prescribing an antidepressant fulfills the quality measure for a positive PHQ-9 – but completing the quality measure form is also suggested.

Steward also has a quality measure for documenting depression remission – which is defined as a PHQ-9 score done at a subsequent visit with a score of < 5. This is not, however, one of the measures for Prima CARE in 2019.

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October 7, 2019