

**RIQI/RI-PTN TCPi Exemplary Practice Story: Asthma and Allergy Physicians of RI (AAPRI)**




To achieve excellence in patient care, Barbara Bracken, the Office Manager at Asthma and Allergy Physicians of Rhode Island, prioritizes *communication* among our staff and providers in our practice.

At Asthma and Allergy Physicians of Rhode Island (AAPRI), we put a strong emphasis on an ‘Every Patient Matters’ mindset. At our three locations, our four clinicians provide care for approximately 11,000 patients for a range of allergy related problems. As described on our website, <http://allergyri.com/>, we treat a range of issues, such as asthma, allergies, chronic cough, hives, allergic reactions, eczema, sinus problems and more. Dr. Zwetchkenbaum, who has been voted a “Top Doc” in *Rhode Island Monthly* numerous times, has an inventive approach and is involved in on-going clinical research in the field (<http://aapriresearch.net/>). As an organization, AAPRI works to innovate and think outside the box. Our strong clinical quality, efficiency and patient and family engagement is buoyed by excellent leadership and communication that leads to ongoing coordinated efforts and success.

**Data Driven Success Providing Optimal and Efficient Care**

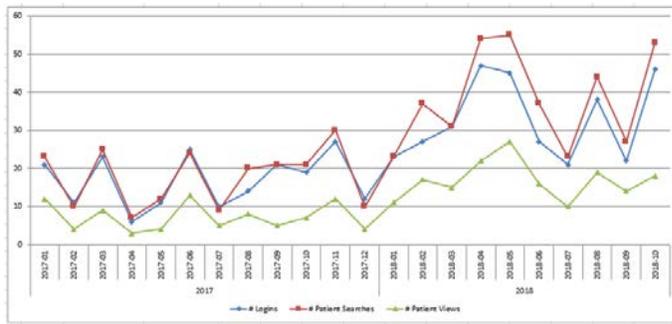
Dr. Zwetchkenbaum is always looking for new opportunities and innovations to help people and improve the care we provide at AAPRI. Most recently, our practice has been moving towards a more *holistic* approach to care. To enhance this element of our practice, we recently hired a Licensed Naturopath. Additionally, Dr. Zwetchkenbaum recently became certified in Functional Medicine so that our practice can more effectively apply an integrated and holistic approach to healing.

In line with our focus on providing excellent, comprehensive care, AAPRI closely tracks our Clinical Quality Metrics. As seen in the adjacent chart, we meet or exceed national benchmarks for both the *Tobacco Use: Screening and Cessation* Interventions and for the *Documentation of Current Medications* measures. Our efforts to provide support around tobacco cessation and in making sure our medication documentation is strong is key given the nature of our specialty. As many of our patients suffer from asthma, helping these individuals stop smoking is extremely beneficial to their health. Additionally, being a specialty practice that often prescribes allergy related medications (which might also be prescribed by a primary care provider), being sure to have a thoroughly vetted medication list is critical for us. It can be noted that our strong performance in this area has been very valuable when successfully reporting MIPS.

Asthma and Allergy Physicians of RI Performance Chart			
Quality Measure	Performance Target	Current Performance	National MIPS Benchmark
Prevention			
Tobacco Use: Screening and Cessation Intervention	100%	83%	83%
Body Mass Index (BMI) Screening and Follow-up Plan	52%	33%	45%
Documentation of Current Medications in the Medical Record <sup>a</sup>	N/A	100%	89%

<sup>a</sup> an additional measure not included in quarterly reporting for CMS

*At AAPRI, success in Clinical Quality Measures, such as seen in our performance in the Tobacco Use: Screening and Cessation and Documentation of Medications categories, is a reflection of the excellent care provided at our practice.*



Staff at AAPRI have a strong level of engagement with using CurrentCare (RI's Health Information exchange- HIE). Above is data tracking our use of the Current Care Viewer (note: RI is an opt-in state. With approximately half of the population enrolled, an expected ratio of patient searches to record views is 2:1)

AAPRI's strong Clinical Quality Metrics also hinge on a solid effort to leverage and integrate the use of data in our day to day practice. A number of our Medical Assistants regularly utilize the CurrentCare Viewer (Rhode Island's Health Information Exchange) to conduct chart prep before patient appointments. Their regular use of this tool can be seen in the adjacent graph that documents their patient searches and CurrentCare record views over time. A story highlighting the experiences of one of our clinical leaders in use of the CurrentCare Viewer, Jessica Godena, is included in the Appendix. Through using CurrentCare, staff

at AAPRI are able to provide patients with a safer medication reconciliation, as this tool can fill the gaps when patients don't remember all of their medications.

Another element of success at AAPRI is our excellent interoffice communication and development as well as the implementation of targeted processes that enhance our efficiency. Given the interrelationship of staff among multiple sites, AAPRI employs a number of targeted strategies to make sure that all the staff in our practice stay on the 'same page.' This is critical to providing continuity and continuous high performance in our care. Importantly, we have developed strong workflows to streamline our note writing and messaging. Keeping the perspective that *each message represents a person*, we prioritize follow-up for all messages to ensure that patients receive the responses that they require. We avoid wasting time calling each other for updates or to share

important information regarding patients. We also leverage a combined Front Desk/ Back Desk workflow in which one person is assigned to handle faxes, outgoing calls and outreach while the other manages the incoming daily appointment check-ins. This workflow takes the burden off the front desk staff, enhances collaboration and promotes a sense of optimism for AAPRI staff when they are approaching their work. With this workflow, staff at the front desk know that someone is there helping them out in the background so they do not have a pile of faxes to process once patients are checked-in.

FRONT DESK CHECK LIST	BACK DESK CHECK LIST
<p>___ COUNT PETTY CASH AM/ PM AM/ PM AM/ PM</p> <p>___ DATE AND INITIAL BOOK/SHEET</p> <p>___ CHECK GENERAL MAILBOX AM/ PM AM/ PM AM/ PM</p> <p>___ CHECK SPANISH MAILBOX AM/ PM AM/ PM AM/ PM</p> <p>___ CHECK FAXES AM/ PM AM/ PM AM/ PM</p> <p>___ CHECK FAILED FAXES AM/ PM AM/ PM AM/ PM</p> <p>___ CHECK PRACTICE EMAIL AM/ PM AM/ PM AM/ PM</p> <p>___ CHECK LUMA HEALTH AM/ PM AM/ PM AM/ PM</p> <p>___ CHECK ENCOUNTERS FOR THE NEXT DAY AM/ PM AM/ PM</p> <p>___ PRINT OUT ENCOUNTERS Date: Date: Date:</p> <p>___ CHECK IF NEED UPDATE</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• PHOTO</li> <li>• REFERRAL</li> <li>• CHECK BALANCES</li> <li>• COPAY</li> <li>• PCP</li> </ul> <p>___ CHECKING PT'S IN:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• PUT ALL INFORMATION IN PATIENT'S CHART</li> <li>• GET PCP</li> <li>• IF SIGNS UP FOR PORTAL GIVE PASSWORD &amp; PT PORTAL INFO CARD</li> <li>• SEND RESEARCH DOC TO DEB LEDOUX</li> </ul> <p>___ MAKE SURE ALL SCANNING IS DONE</p> <p>___ CHECK FORMS AND SEE IF COPIES NEED TO BE MADE</p> <p>___ CONFIRM APPT FOR THE NEXT DAY</p> <p>___ IF A NEW PT CANCEL/RESCHEDULE, NEED TO FILL THAT TIME SLOT.</p> <p>___ DOCUMENT ON THE APPT IF YOU LEFT A MESSAGE OR SPOKE WITH THE PATIENT</p> <p>___ LOOK AT THE SCHEDULE AHEAD AND CALL THE PATIENTS AND SEE IF WANT TO COME IN SOONER. ALSO PLEASE DOCUMENT ON THE APPT IF YOU LEFT A MESSAGE OR SPOKE WITH THE PATIENT.</p> <p>___ BATCH OUT END OF THE DAY</p> <p>___ BATCH OUT CREDIT CARD MACHINE</p> <p>___ MAKE COPIES OF CHECKS</p> <p>___ PROVIDENCE AND WARWICK DEPOSITS GO TO KAREN</p> <p>___ LINCOLN DEPOSITS GO TO CHRIS</p> <p>___ LOG OUT OF ECV</p> <p>___ PLEASE SEND THIS TO IZ</p> <p>SIGNATURE: _____ DATE: _____ OFFICE: _____</p>	<p><b>1. CHECK GENERAL MESSAGES</b></p> <p><b>2. CHECK EMAIL</b></p> <p><b>3. Check Luma Health</b></p> <p><b>4. CONFIRM TODAY'S APPT THAT ARE STILL PENDING FOR ALL PROVIDERS</b></p> <p><b>5. FAXES</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• PRIORS</li> <li>• REFERRAL (LUMA HEALTH)/ALSO FOLLOW UP ON OLDER REFERRAL TO SEE IF PT'S HAVE MADE APPOINTMENTS YET</li> <li>• LABS</li> <li>• XRAY</li> <li>• REFILLS</li> </ul> <p><b>6. NEW PATIENT</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• CONFIRM APPT</li> <li>• WELCOME TO PRACTICE:             <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. GO OVER PAPERWORK</li> <li>2. WHICH PROVIDER SEEING</li> <li>3. WHICH OFFICE GOING TO</li> <li>4. ASK IF ANY SPECIAL REQUIREMENTS. PROVIDENCE OFFICE HAS STAIRS.</li> </ol> </li> </ul> <p><b>7. FILL IN PROVIDERS SCHEDULE (NEW PT'S)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• MAKE SURE REFERRAL IS IN PLACE FIRST IF NEEDED</li> </ul> <p>SIGNATURE: _____ DATE: _____</p>

A view of the Back Desk/Front desk check lists developed at AAPRI. These tools helped improve the front desk workflow at our practice and increased efficiency as well joy in work for staff involved.

### Keeping the Patient in the Loop: The AAPRI Approach to Patient and Family Engagement

An excellent example of AAPRI's patient and family engagement can be seen through our implementation of the Luma system. Luma is an automated scheduling, referral and survey management system through which patients receive text messages and reminders (so that staff do not have to manually call them in advance of an appointment). Luma also provides a means for AAPRI to solicit feedback from patients after each appointment. We continuously leverage this feedback to ensure we are meeting our patients' needs and providing optimal care. For example, by using technology in this way, AAPRI

listened to our patients and put in place an automated method to offer those on a wait list the opportunity to fill an appointment slot if another patient cancels. Using the Luma system, if a patient cancels an appointment, another patient on a wait-list will automatically get a text message offering that appointment (using the system, patients can easily add themselves to the wait list). Our notable success in implementing this system was featured in a Luma Customer Spotlight story (available in the appendix).

Other notable example of the how AAPRI consistently works to improve our patients' experience can be seen through our financial transparency, our efforts to accommodate a range of patient scheduling needs and our engagement in patient activation. For instance, the team at AAPRI is transparent with patients regarding costs and we do our best to provide them with cost savings. We regularly offer ways for patients to receive discounts on medications, as well as provide coupons for higher priced medications (when available). Also, during recent changes in our office locations, AAPRI nurses recognized that some patients who receive regular allergy injections were experiencing a significant change to their routines. Our nurses listened to our patients and we opened shot appointments on another day. We find that thoughtful modifications such as this lead to overall higher patient satisfaction. Lastly, AAPRI has engaged in the RI-PTN TCPI Pilot with Prochange. This patient driven program, called HealthCoach for Me, addresses health issues, such as tobacco use and weight management, through application of the Transtheoretical Model of Change.

### **Conclusions**

Asthma and Allergy Physicians of Rhode Island is an exemplary practice that shines in the areas of patient engagement, efficiency and clinical quality measures. We work to constantly advance our care to best serve our patients with new, holistic approaches. Our clinical Quality measure data keeps us informed and we thoughtfully utilize different platforms of technology, such as Luma, CurrentCare, and HealthCoach for Me. We truly pride ourselves in having strong communication within our practices so that we may best coordinate care for our patients and maintain effective workflows. Our excellence in engagement in TCPI concepts has led to further both our advancements in the care we provide as well as enhanced joy in work for the staff within our busy practice.

## Appendix

### Customer Spotlight: Asthma & Allergy Physicians of Rhode Island

Written April 09, 2018 by Angie Shin



Barbara Bracken, the office manager of **Asthma & Allergy Physicians of Rhode Island**, oversees a vibrant clinic spread across four locations in America's most diminutive state. To say the least, she's a master of coordination and organization, thanks in part to Luma Health assisting her in her daily responsibilities.

#### **How has Luma helped coordinate your operations across several locations?**

With four locations, communication between our offices is vital. Luma has helped us, first and foremost, with verifying appointments. Before Luma, there used to be significant confusion when cancellations happened between offices. Patients now are able to put themselves on the waitlist, and they can capture an appointment at an open time and at a specific location. It gives them flexibility and saves us a lot of time. Honestly, Luma has been a great way to be **a central, one-source spot for patients to schedule their visits** with us.

#### **How has your experience of utilizing the Luma platform been?**

Our old system was disjointed and unreliable. Luma is pretty easy to navigate—it doesn't take long to get the complete hang of it. Even now, we still find new features and gadgets that we incorporate into our business. That's an aspect of Luma we really enjoy.

If there's anything we ever get stuck on, the support team at Luma gets back to us super quickly. If they don't have an answer, they keep plugging until they find one. We ran into an issue once and before I was able to even report it and get a ticket in, we received an email from Luma acknowledging the problem and fixing it. They've been proactive about even minor issues and we appreciate that here.

#### **Has Luma's unique ability to capture patient feedback been beneficial to your clinic?**

Definitely! We never had a patient survey and spent a long time attempting to figure out how to properly create one. Just as we were working through the logistics, Luma came along with this great feature.

Patients really enjoy it. Luma only asks for yes/no questions or answers based on a one-through-ten scale, but often, we'll get really in-depth text messages and feedback from a patient. Luma has really **allowed our patients to express themselves**. We've gotten so much positive feedback. It's also helped us get some positive experiences out to Google, as well.

Good experiences don't get written about nearly as much as complaints. But I'm finding that with Luma, even if a patient has a complaint, it stops at my office. I'm able to identify, investigate and remedy an issue for a patient quickly—well before it ends up on social media. Patients have a forum to reach me directly. Luma allows me to better communicate with them.

### **What's an interesting and perhaps unexpected way that Luma has affected your daily operations?**

Luma has allowed us to be more proactive—this goes back to filling appointment slots. We used to call and hurry patients in because they were sick. With Luma, we are able to better schedule people at regular intervals, not simply when they are already ill. We've become more organized and I credit Luma with that, especially with new patients and referrals.

Even during the typical slow periods like the dead of summer, our doctors were surprised that we were able to fill the schedule with patients. Further, my staff isn't stuck doing as many outgoing calls. Luma has alleviated a lot of that stress. Part of this is because Luma sends out those text messages, which prompts a response. In the end, a **higher response rate means more appointments**, and that brings in revenue.

**AAPRI CurrentCare Story:**

<http://www.currentcareri.org/KnowledgeCenter/ViewerResources/MyCurrentCareStory.aspx#723174-iessica-godena-asthma--allergy-physicians-of-ri>

## Jessica Godena

Medical Assistant

*Asthma & Allergy Physicians of RI*



### **How did things take place before CurrentCare?**

At Asthma and Allergy Physicians of RI, Medical Assistants complete chart prep and rooming tasks to help make patient visits as thorough and efficient as possible. Before we had CurrentCare, we would have to rely on our patients' knowledge of their own medications, which wasn't always completely accurate and detailed. As far as getting other important information, such as lab results and x-rays, often we could not get this data until the day of the appointment. We would need to ask the patient where they went to get the test done and then call the facility to have the results faxed to us. This was time consuming - we would have to wait for the results and this would slow down our schedule for the day.

### **How do things take place with CurrentCare?**

Now that we are using CurrentCare for patients who are enrolled we can complete a medication reconciliation that is more accurate as far as documenting dosages and strengths of the medications being taken. (Patients often don't know or specifically remember this information). In CurrentCare, we are able to look at the prescription details as they are written by the prescribing physician. Additionally, we can expedite lab results and other clinically relevant information. We can get the data we need before the patient even arrives, so the visit can be smoother and no one has to wait.

### **How does that impact your life/work?**

Having CurrentCare makes our lives easier and keeps our schedule moving efficiently throughout the day. We are able to manage our time better and often have the information we need in advance of a patient's visit. When we can provide a better medication reconciliation along with the lab and x-ray data that is needed, the providers are appreciative and happy. This dynamic keeps all staff positive and improves satisfaction in the patient care we provide.