

RIQI/RI-PTN TCPI Exemplary Practice Story: Blackstone Valley Foot and Ankle



At Blackstone Valley Foot and Ankle, we live by our **Mission**: *Our practice is working together to realize a shared vision of uncompromising excellence in podiatric care.*

At Blackstone Valley Foot & Ankle, we have been proudly serving the city of Pawtucket, Rhode Island for more than 38 years. Our team consists of three Board Certified Podiatrists all under the leadership of Dr. Joseph K. Domenico, who purchased the practice in 2015. Dr. Domenico believes the more information and tools patients have, the better he can help them. He and our team at Blackstone Valley Foot & Ankle are dedicated to making sure each patient has an understanding of their condition and what their treatment plan is. As described on our website (<http://www.bvfoot.com>): “We are dedicated to keeping the residents of Pawtucket, Rhode Island active and on their feet through expert and compassionate podiatric care.”

Our team at Blackstone Valley Foot & Ankle prioritizes transparency and empathy. We strive to maintain a great relationship with every patient. In our welcoming environment, we provide podiatric care for between 4,500-5,000 patients of all ages, from children to adults, with the largest segment of our population being Caucasian females over the age of 65. Along with routine and diabetic foot care needs and the unique needs of athletes, we provide patients with a variety of services, including: podiatric surgery, treating bunions and plantar warts, providing physical therapy for sprained ankles, and creating custom orthotics. Whatever the age or the ailment, our patients primarily come from our surrounding urban community of Pawtucket where our singular location is situated. For everyone we serve, we want them to know that we value and care about every one of them. We live by our Mission: *Our practice is working together to realize a shared vision of uncompromising excellence in podiatric care.* With this purpose, we have developed a practice that puts our patients at ease while empowering them through information and understanding. Additionally, we have worked with the Rhode Island Quality Institute (RIQI) Practice Transformation Network (PTN) to advance our use of data in our practice. We are improving on our clinical quality measures and successfully participated in the RIQI ED Avoidance Improvement Project. Our work in these areas align with our goal of continuous improvement.

Moving Into the Future: Using Data to Improve and Advance Quality

Advancing the use of data and quality improvement strategies are very important activities at Blackstone Valley Foot & Ankle. We are rapidly learning that better reporting leads to better care for patients. In particular, we have improved our tracking of clinical quality measures using our Electronic Health Record (EHR) and we successfully reported for MIPS in 2018. As seen in the adjacent visual, we are specifically making improvements in the Tobacco Use: Screening and Cessation Intervention Quality Measure because of

Blackstone Valley Foot & Ankle Performance Chart				
Quality Measure	Performance Target	Current Performance		National MIPS Benchmark
Prevention				
		Q2 2019	Q1 20019	
Tobacco Use: Screening and Cessation Intervention	80%	87%	83%	83%

At Blackstone Valley Foot and Ankle, we have grown in our understanding and use of clinical quality measure data. As seen above, through our involvement with the RIQI PTN, we reported on the Tobacco Use Screening and Cessation Intervention measure for which we met the National MIPS Benchmark

successful improvements in our workflows. As we continue to engage in developing strategies to leverage data and technological tools, we are excited about our continued advancement in this area of our practice.

We have also gained in our understanding of quality improvement through our participation in the Rhode Island Quality Institute (RIQI) Practice Transformation Network's (PTN) Emergency Department (ED) Avoidance Project. Our targeted interventions for this included:

- Educating patients to come to our office instead of the ED if they needed to be seen for an acute or emergency issue they might be having with their feet
- Including availability in Dr. Domenico's daily schedule to accommodate these appointments.
- Hanging posters in our waiting room to remind patients that they could come to us for this assistance and care. The adjacent picture provides an example of a poster that was used as part of this initiative.

As can be seen by our data, we were very successful in our ED Avoidance Project efforts. Over a three month period, we documented the avoidance of 17 unnecessary ED visits at a cost savings of approximately \$27,200. These results can be seen in the adjacent table. Most importantly, by providing this service, we are confident that we were able to give our patients better treatment than they would have received at an ED. For patients going to the ED for foot ailments that can appropriately be handled by our office, they would likely have significant wait times and they would not benefit from Dr. Domenico and our teams' specific *expertise* in treating podiatric issues. Additionally, it is important to keep in mind that ED providers do not have the same access to the specific equipment and testing needed for advanced podiatric care. By providing same day visits, we were therefore better able to serve our patients while also promoting enhanced continuity of care that they receive by coming to us. *We know* them and have their history in our records. Given this, we are therefore better suited to serve their specific, individual needs.

Conclusion

At Blackstone Valley Foot & Ankle, we are proud of our relationships with our patients and our community. Our patient centered care is sustained by our dedicated staff. We work to promote respect and a supportive environment for the individuals we serve. The numerous positive testimonials on our website support our efforts. As described by one, "Excellent! Dr. Domenico and his staff were wonderful, thoughtful and creative." Knowing that our patients are benefitting from our care in this way makes all the difference. Importantly, we are also pleased with the strides we have made in using data and improvement science to bolster our services and patient care. In particular, we are pleased with our success with increasing our screening rates for the *Tobacco Use: Screening and Cessation measure*. We look to continue in these efforts as we continue to help people improve their lives and the podiatric health.

Foot Emergency? Skip the Emergency Room & Call Us! 401-213-5210



We know the history with your feet & have the tools to properly diagnose you. If you are experiencing any of the following issues, you should seek medical attention from us:

- Infections
- Pain or trauma to the foot or ankle
- Ingrown toenails
- Warts/ Bunions
- More

We are happy to offer same-day appointments for all your feet emergencies. At **Blackstone Valley Foot & Ankle**, the health of your feet is our #1 priority!

Participation in the RIQI PTN ED Avoidance Project led our practice to help patients avoid unnecessary ED visits. During the 3 months we tracked data, we documented 17 instances in which a patient received same day care in our office, thus avoiding treatment at an emergency room. This ED avoidance leads to a cost savings of approximately \$27,200. Also, above is an example of the posters that we hung in our waiting room to ensure patients were aware of the option to come to us in these situations.

