

**RIQI/RI-PTN TCPI Exemplary Story: Brown Dermatology**



*Dr. Christopher DiMarco and Daniel Labrador of Brown Dermatology.*

*Our exemplary practice is proud of our strong ties to Brown University and excellence in training for the Dermatology specialists of our future*

Brown Dermatology is truly an exemplary organization and a leader in the Rhode Island healthcare community. We have ten sites with over 20 dermatologists (who are board certified by the American Board of Dermatology) serving approximately 32,000 patient for visits in our facilities each year. Our services are targeted for a range of dermatological concerns, including the diagnosis and treatment of over 3,000 types of skin conditions, including acne, eczema, melasma, rosacea, vitiligo and skin cancer. Given this, our patient base has an extremely broad range, including individuals with cancer diagnoses and children. As described on our website, <http://brownderm.org/>, “we treat patients of all ages including newborns to centenarians and are comfortable tailoring care to any population.” The team at Brown Dermatology are experts in our field and we boast accreditations from a myriad of organizations, including The American Academy of Dermatology, The American Society for Dermatologic Surgery and the Society for Pediatric Dermatology. Central to our work is our three point mission which encompasses *education, clinical care* and *research*. Specific strengths at Brown Dermatology can be seen through our enhanced clinical practice that involves a multi-disciplinary approach, a focus on keeping patients at the center of care, and our ongoing efforts to promote efficiency in our work.

**A Multi-Disciplinary Approach with Strong Engagement in Community, Education and the Future**

Key to excellence in care at Brown Dermatology is our multi-disciplinary approach. Our combined specialty focuses include: a Skin and Musculoskeletal Center (Rheumatology/ Dermatology), a Contact Dermatitis Center, a Hair Disease Clinic, a Pigmented Lesions Unit, a Multidisciplinary Melanoma Program, a Multidisciplinary Cutaneous Carcinoma and Sarcoma Clinic (High risk, Non-melanoma Skin Cancer), a Cutaneous Lymphoma Clinic and a Transplant Clinic. Combining the unique expertise of clinicians within each of these settings has notably augmented a targeted, collaborative approach to care which leads to an enhanced patient experience. For example, we have a tumor board that includes both oncologists and surgeons who come together to review and develop specific treatment plans for individuals. Pharmacists are also included in these cooperative evaluations and assessments. Also, with our multi-disciplinary approach, we can better identify complex patients and appropriately include them in joint clinics which are run by experts in each field. Along with this, it is important to note that we boast the largest contingent of dermatologic pediatric patients in the state. Given our interdisciplinary structure, we are well situated to provide care for this unique population.

Our mission driven nature is sustained through a strong partnership with Brown University as well as through the support of six foundations that actively contribute to the work being done within our group. Many of our physicians serve as faculty in the Department of Dermatology in the Warren Alpert

Medical School. In conjunction with Brown University, Brown Dermatology provides a myriad of opportunities for learning and education. Specifically, we are the only academic dermatology practice in Rhode Island and the premier site for teaching and training Brown medical students and dermatology residents. We are also the only dermatology practice in the state that provides clinical rotations for Physician Assistant students. By including this emphasis on education in our approach, Brown Dermatology stays tied to advancements in healthcare through teaching and engagement in research. By having medical students and residents within our practices, we benefit from the new ideas, quality improvement and projects that are continuously infused through our teams. We are proud to provide opportunities for current and future leaders in the field and our faculty is deeply engaged in shaping the future of care in our specialty.

In line with our organization's connection with Brown University and other organizations within our state, we have a unique and active presence in our local communities as well as in social media (as seen in the adjacent example of a social media post featuring Dr. DiMarco). In the peak of the Rhode Island summer, our clinicians and staff can be found on beaches on coastal areas, engaging individuals and providing cancer screenings and education. On an annual basis, our faculty provide information at the Butler Hospital campus health fair. We also are involved with advocacy in work we have done to battle laws, such as allowing individuals under-18 to be able to use tanning booths.

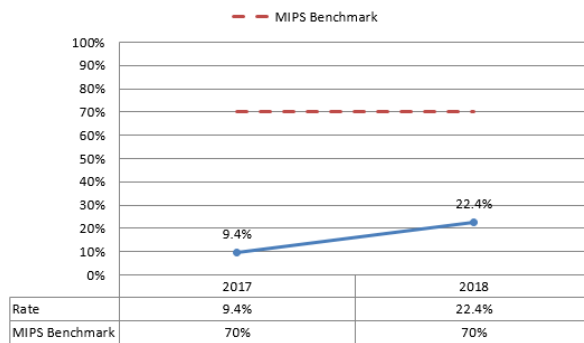
### Care that Centers on the Patient Experience and Engagement

As previously explained, Brown Dermatology's efforts to provide an optimal patient experience is buoyed by the existence of our cross-disciplinary clinics. These care settings were created to provide the optimal level of specialized care for patients experiencing a wide range of dermal issues. In our clinics, excellence in care in our priority. As can be seen in the below run charts, we leverage specialty specific clinical quality measures to track our improvement (as can be seen in the below run charts that feature our improvement from 9.4% to 22.4% in our *Psoriasis: Clinical Response to Oral or Biologics* measure and our extremely high performance in our *Overutilization of Imaging studies in Melanoma* measure). But, there are many other ways that our practice has advanced the patient experience. For example, for individuals undergoing surgery, to help them navigate through each phase of the process, we have developed a streamlined and efficient process in which they have clarity about where they need to go as soon as they arrive. Over time, we have leveraged patient journey mapping to assess the flow of the patient experience so that we could be sure to have the best system in place. An additional impact of the redesign of this workflow was that it helped direct where nurses and physicians should be and enhanced communication for everyone involved.

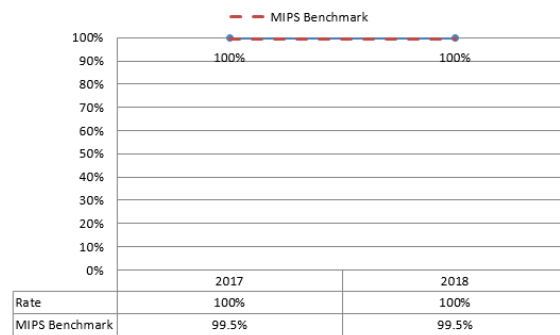


Our physicians at Brown Dermatology leverage a variety of methods for providing education to patients including the use of social media to share important information about dermatological health. For example, Dr. DiMarco has hosted many posts sharing reminders about the importance of the use of sunscreen.

Psoriasis Clinical Response to Oral or Biologics



Melanoma Overutilization of Imaging Studies in Melanoma



At Brown Dermatology, we track a number of clinical quality metrics that are specific to our specialty. With this data, we can work towards enhancing quality, such as seen by our *Psoriasis: Clinical Response to Oral or Biologics* measure that significantly improved from 2017 to 2018 along with our metrics that demonstrate our high performance, such as our *Overutilization of Imaging Studies in Melanoma* metric

To further enhance the patient experience and engagement, we offer a robust patient portal through which we are planning to connect with patients by sending regular appointment reminders and other dermatology specific information (such as reminders to schedule cancer screenings regularly). Along with having electronic resources, we provide diagnosis specific educational hand-outs and materials for patients that support clinical care and provide a visual modality of learning. Additionally, our organization provides excellent access to care for their patients. In particular, for patients with an acute dermatological issues, urgent care is available within 48 to 72 hours (if eligibility and referrals align).

Dr. Winestock, Chairman at Brown Dermatology, often notes that our organization prides itself on providing ethical, efficient, and compassionate care. We are thoughtful regarding the necessity of interventions and don't do "procedures just to do procedures." We foster a culture in which there is a *reduction* of cost of care while continuing to provide appropriate care. For example, if a more minimal, topical surgery may be an option for a patient, this procedure will be recommended as it will be less invasive and costly than other alternatives.

### On-Going Focus on Excellence at All Levels of Practice

Internally at Brown Dermatology, our focus on excellence includes efforts to promote joy in work for our staff. We have installed shout-out boards and 'kudos' (job well done!) boxes for our employees that they can use to provide positive feedback and recognition within our practices. We have also instituted targeted employee recognitions: if a manager is informed that someone did a great job, the individual will receive a gift card and appreciation. From what we have learned through staff surveys that have been administered, these small interventions have afforded great feedback from our large staff.

Using a data driven approach, we also regularly work to support the improvement and integration of efficient processes in the tasks being done within our practice. An excellent example is our new workflow that leverages electronic labeling and order form creation for biopsy samples. Since implementing this new system at one of our sites, we now have fewer forms that do not syncing with the system due to errors. Data of several of our attendings in November and December of 2018 found that, for those ordering biopsies electronically, out of 121 biopsies ordered, they had *no* errors, but for those who were still using the paper process, they had an

In a trial of our new workflow for labeling biopsy samples we succeeded in *eliminating* errors in this process (from a previous error rate of 6.6%).

error rate of 6.6% (with 23 errors out of the 349 biopsies performed). Given this success, along with an overall positive response from staff, we are currently in the process of spreading

### **Conclusions**

It is clear to see why Brown Dermatology is easily identified as an exemplary practice. Our strong focus on our mission, focusing on *education, clinical care* and *research*, has guided us to many successes and a strong reputation in our region. Our success arguably stems from our interdisciplinary approach and is driven by a core of outstanding leaders, including our clinical directors and our Chair, Dr. Abrar Qureshi. But, primarily, our achievements center on our enhanced clinical practice that involves a multi-disciplinary approach, a focus on keeping patients at the center of care, and our ongoing efforts to promote efficiency in our work.