Vanderbilt is a major player in clinical research to improve the quality and efficiency of health care delivery in the U.S. This work is often directly supported through federal agencies such as AHRQ and the CMS Innovation Center, as well as PCORI. Research of this nature has the potential for significant savings to public payers such as Medicare and Medicaid and better health outcomes for patients.

AHRQ VANDERBILT EVIDENCE-BASED PRACTICE CENTER

Since 2007, Vanderbilt’s Institute for Medicine and Public Health has been under contract with AHRQ to undertake systematic reviews of topics in areas such as women’s health, child health, trauma, and cardiology. Vanderbilt is one of only ten Evidence-based Practice Centers (EPCs) funded by this program in the country. The EPCs review all available scientific literature, such as peer reviewed journals, to produce detailed evidence reports and technology assessments used by a variety of stakeholders for informing and developing coverage decisions, quality measures, educational materials and tools, guidelines, and research agendas.

V-POCKET PROGRAM

In 2014, Vanderbilt was awarded a five-year, $3.3 million institutional training grant by AHRQ for the V-POCKET program (Vanderbilt Patient-centered Outcomes Research Career Knowledge, Education, and Training). As its name suggests, V-POCKET will focus on patient-centered outcomes research and will not be limited to a specific disease or type of patient. The research program aims to produce clinically relevant, patient-specific information that can help patients make decisions about treatment options.

SAFETY OF ADHD MEDICATIONS

Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) medications do not increase the risk for heart disease or heart attack in children and young adults, according to a Vanderbilt study of 1.2 million patients taking drugs including Ritalin, Adderall, Concerta, and Strattera between 1998 and 2005. That study, published in the New England Journal of Medicine in 2011, was supported by funding from the AHRQ and the Food and Drug Administration (FDA).

CMMI “MY HEALTH TEAM” AND IMPROVED CHRONIC DISEASE MANAGEMENT

In 2012, Vanderbilt University Medical Center (VUMC) was granted a three-year, $18.8 million Health Care Innovation Award from CMMI to improve chronic disease management for patients with high blood pressure, heart failure, and diabetes. Many of these high-risk, high-cost patients are beneficiaries of Medicare and Medicaid and reside in eighteen rural and urban counties in Tennessee and Kentucky. To improve disease management, Vanderbilt is using inter-professional health care teams and enhanced health information technology (HIT), including disease registries and evidence-based decision support integrated into the clinical workflow. Because an inter-professional staff with access to HIT can improve communication, care planning, and monitoring, the health care teams will be better able to respond to patients between office visits, track and follow up acute-care episodes, and provide advanced alerts and decision-making support, resulting in improved coordination of outpatient care and reduced hospital admissions and emergency room visits. The estimated three-year savings to CMS is over $27 million.

REDUCING HOSPITALIZATIONS FOR “DUAL ELIGIBLES”

VUMC also received a $2.45 million CMMI Health Care Innovation Award for a program, in partnership with more than twenty area skilled nursing facilities, designed to reduce
inpatient re-hospitalization and improve the patient experience for approximately 27,000 Medicare-Medicaid dual eligible beneficiaries in ten counties in Tennessee, including rural and underserved areas. The project focuses on hospital discharge planning, evidence-based interventions, and improved clinical responsiveness at post-acute facilities with estimated savings of approximately $8.7 million over a three-year period.

PCORI
DEVELOPING THE MID-SOUTH CLINICAL DATA RESEARCH NETWORK

Vanderbilt University is a key component of PCORI’s PCORnet, a National Patient-Centered Clinical Research Network that NIH Director Francis Collins and others have said "holds the promise to transform clinical research."* In December 2013, Vanderbilt received an eighteen-month, $6.9 million award from PCORI to set up one of eleven Clinical Data Research Networks (CDRNs) that will join eighteen patient-powered research networks across the country. The Vanderbilt-centered network, named the Mid-South CDRN, will have access to more than two million patient records in the Vanderbilt Health System, an estimated three-to-four million patients in the Vanderbilt Health Affiliated Network, and about twenty-five million patients through a partnership with Greenway Medical Technologies Inc., a leading health information technology company. Initially, the Mid-South CDRN will recruit three unique cohorts of research subjects for studies of (1) weight-related health issues, (2) coronary heart diseases, and (3) families affected by sickle cell disease.

COMPARATIVE EFFECTIVENESS RESEARCH

Vanderbilt researchers have been actively engaged in comparative effectiveness research. For example, Vanderbilt’s David Penson, M.D., is engaged in PCORI-supported research related to prostate cancer. Prostate cancer is the most common solid tumor among American men and the leading cause of cancer death. Dr. Penson’s research seeks to compare the effectiveness and harms of contemporary surgery, radiation, and active surveillance for patients diagnosed with this cancer. The research will also help identify and analyze outcome “profiles” associated with therapies that can be used to inform patient-specific outcome trajectories and identify patient-level characteristics that influence the effectiveness of specific treatment options.


For more information, please contact Vanderbilt’s Office of Federal Relations:
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