Health Systems Demonstration Phase III | The Impact of Patient Complexity on Healthcare Utilization

- **Term:** 06/01/2018 – 05/31/2019
- **Grantee:** OCHIN, Inc.
- **Sub-recipient:** Kaiser Permanente Northwest Center for Health Research
- **Funding Agency:** PCORI
- **Grant Number:** HSD-1603-34987

In Phase II of the Health Systems Demonstration Project, we found that increasing community-level social complexity—or social determinants of health (SDH) factors such as lower income, limited education, and living in a highly-deprived neighborhood—significantly associate with both higher rates of emergency department use and clinic-level rates of poor diabetes control.

For Phase III, we are partnering with Kaiser Permanente’s Strategic Partners Patient Outcomes to Advance Learning (PORTAL) CDRN to build upon these findings by expanding our analyses to include a patient cohort more representative of the general population, and bringing in additional individual-level SDH data to explore the relative contribution of individual- and community-level SDH factors to variation in health care utilization and outcomes. We will engage stakeholders throughout our process to guide the research and to understand how these measures can best be utilized by the health care community.

**Potential Impact**

By evaluating a cohort representing a broad range of social complexity, we hope to better understand the full effect of social vulnerability on health outcomes.

Findings from this study have the potential to improve decision-making and care at both the clinical and health system levels. Furthermore, this study has the potential to highlight the need for health systems to advocate for adequate risk-adjustment to sufficiently equip and resource providers and clinics serving more socially-complex groups. Our results will also inform an approach for future Social Determinants of Health research focusing on other outcome measures.
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