



The WREN Review

Wisconsin Research and Education Network

October 2007

Volume 1, Issue 2

FROM THE DIRECTOR

Welcome to the second issue of The WREN Review. We plan to publish this newsletter quarterly to keep WREN friends and members informed about our activities.

The rapid expansion of WREN continues as we welcome three new WREN staff since our last update. Cindy Colombo and Katie Pronschinske recently joined Peggy O'Halloran and Lisa Kietzer as Practice Enhancement and Education Assistants (PEEAs). We also welcome Adina Tucker, our new administrative assistant at the Department of Family Medicine. You can read more about each of our new employees on page 6.

Katie Pronschinske will be part of the Center for Urban Population Health (CUPH) in Milwaukee, under local direction of Dennis Baumgartner, MD. Like WREN, CUPH is involved in the Wisconsin Initiative to Promote Health Lifestyles (WIPHL) project and the Wisconsin Network for Healthcare Research (WinHR). With Dennis' help, we will be recruiting at least three additional full support practices in the Milwaukee area which will increase the ethnic diversity of the WREN practice population.

We have made progress with the development of the WREN Practice Agreement, our formal agreement with WREN full support practices. Mile Bluff Clinic in Mauston gets the prize for the first practice to finish the contracting process.

In funding news, the UW Clinical Translational Science Award (CTSA) five year federal grant was funded starting on October 1st. This, along with additional support from the UW School of Medicine and Public Health gives WREN secure infrastructure funding for the next several years.

Also, two WREN collaborators recently received federal grant awards. Bentzi Karsh, PhD from the UW Department of Industrial Engineering, had his one year project *Proactive Risk Assessment of Primary Care of the Elderly* funded by the Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality (AHRQ). Tosha Wetterneck, MD from the UW Internal Medicine Department, had her NIH training grant funded for her project *Assessing Risk in Ambulatory Medication Use after Hospital Transitions*. You will hear more about these projects in future issues of the WREN Review.

We have received some feedback about difficulties with the Zoomerang™ links for recent WREN surveys. We are looking into the problems and exploring the possibility of using other survey tools. Please contact Mike Grasmick at michael.grasmick@fammed.wisc.edu if you are experiencing survey problems.

Finally, the WREN website has a new look. Visit www.fammed.wisc.edu/research/wren to see our new content.

A lot has happened in the last three months and there is a lot more to come. Stay tuned. -Paul Smith, MD, WREN Director

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SAVE THE DATES!

WREN Convocation of Practices

Thursday and Friday May 1 - 2, 2008

Great Wolf Lodge, Wisconsin Dells

CME credit offered, no registration fee

2008 Wisconsin Primary Care Research Forum

Thursday and Friday Nov. 6 - 7, 2008

Wilderness Resort, Wisconsin Dells

(preceding the Wisconsin Academy of

Family Physicians Annual Meeting)

CME credit offered, no registration fee

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PRACTICE CHARACTERIZATION

As WREN continues to expand, systematically gathering information about our practices is helpful in assessing their readiness to conduct research and quality improvement projects. WREN can use this practice data to provide support to practices where it is most needed when implementing projects. The process WREN uses to collect clinic information is referred to as practice characterization.

WREN practice characterization is based on the Practice Characterization Model described by Atkins et al. (*Int J Health Mgmt 2001; 16: 125-138*) as well as the process used by the Oklahoma Practice Based Research Network (*Practice Enhancement Assistant Manual, Oklahoma Center for Family Medicine Research, 2007*). At WREN, practice characterization is performed by the Practice Enhancement and Education Assistants (PEEAs). As they develop working relationships with the clinics they assist, PEEAs collect a wide variety of information about practices. In addition to basic clinic and staff data (e.g. number of patient visits per year, EMR use, staff contact information, percent appointment for each provider), PEEAs collect descriptive information like clinic organizational structure, mission statements, clinic history, past involvement in research and/or quality improvement initiatives, and strengths and weaknesses related to project implementation.

“The main method of data collection, and doubtless the most important one, is face-to-face communication with providers, medical directors, and clinic staff”

Information is collected and stored using a variety of methods. The main method of collection, and doubtless the most important one, is face-to-face communication with providers, medical directors, and clinic staff. PEEAs interact with clinic staff by attending staff meetings, conducting informal interviews, and observing clinic flow. Regular visits to the clinics they assist ensure that PEEAs develop and maintain a productive and amicable relationship with clinic staff. PEEAs also obtain data from clinic brochures, websites, or other publications. Once obtained, practice data is stored in an Access database (for quantifiable or categorical items) and “quick note” narrative files (for descriptive data). PEEAs also keep running logs of contacts with practices and progress notes on specific projects.

WREN is implementing practice characterization with its full support clinics (see page 3), where PEEAs Peggy O’Halloran and Lisa Kietzer are already collecting information through their contacts with physicians and staff. As these practices begin WREN projects, the information collected will be used for grant applications and will improve project organization and efficiency.

UPCOMING PRINS 1 & 2 SURVEYS

A necessary element of practice based research network research is to assess the generalizability of research findings and outcomes. The Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality (AHRQ) developed Primary Care Network Surveys 1 and 2 (PRINS 1 and 2) from The National Ambulatory Care Survey. PRINS 1 and 2 are surveys of clinician/practice demographics and patient visit information, respectively. WREN members completed PRINS 1 and 2 in 2002, and we are planning to update these records this fall with a second round of data collection. To prepare for the collection of this information, we have modified the PRINS 1 survey, and we are in the process of tailoring PRINS 2 with enhanced specificity for WREN practices.

Please look forward to our roll out of the PRINS 1 survey in November. To make survey completion easier, we will identify a survey point person at each of our full-support practices and PEEAs will assist in data collection. Individual WREN members who are not part of full support practices will receive a fax with their 2002 PRINS 1 survey responses to review, and return any needed updates and changes to the survey information to WREN.

WREN FULL SUPPORT CLINICS

New this year, WREN has expanded its membership to include a set of practices where the entire clinic becomes involved in network research. So far, four clinics have signed on with WREN as full support clinics, all of which will soon be actively participating in WREN studies. Read on to find out more about our full support clinic partners.

MEDICAL ASSOCIATES CLINIC—DUBUQUE



Located just across the Mississippi, Medical Associates Clinic operates out of two campuses in Dubuque, IA. Medical Associates is Iowa's oldest multi-specialty group practice, with nearly 100 physicians in 27 departments (WREN will be working with physicians from Internal Medicine and Family Medicine). This is an innovative clinic with a high quality of care, incorporation of technology, and its own health plan. Having participated in pharmaceutical trials for many years, Medical Associates is no stranger to research. Madison native Christine Sinsky, MD serves as the WREN champion at Medical Associates. Donna Welch, RN is the practice facilitator, and Lisa Kietzer is the WREN PEEA working with this clinic. Medical Associates is eager to begin the *Complexity in Family Practice* study, to start soon, with the *Quality of Life and Depression in Hypertensive Patients* study to follow.

OSCEOLA MEDICAL CENTER

Osceola Medical Center (OMC), is a unique practice setting in which clinic, hospital, and nursing home have been consolidated into one locally-managed, non-profit, independent facility. The clinic shares staff with the emergency room, hospital, and nursing home which allows monitoring across the spectrum of care. Currently located on the St. Croix River in downtown Osceola, this busy facility will move to a new health care campus in 2008 to meet the needs of its growing population.

The OMC will begin implementation of the *Quality of Life and Depression in Hypertensive Patients* study this November, with Mary Renninger, CMA acting as the clinic's practice facilitator. Peggy O'Halloran is the PEEA assigned to the clinic, and Dr. Paul Sletten is the clinic champion.



Construction of the new Osceola Medical Center Building

MILE BLUFF CLINIC—MAUSTON

A Rural Health Clinic located in Mauston, WI, Mile Bluff Clinic is a physician-owned practice serving the needs of Juneau County, a historically underserved and high need population. Mile Bluff offers primary care and specialty services through its main clinic and satellite services in New Lisbon, Necedah, Elroy, and Lake Delton. Its cooperative spirit is demonstrated through collaborative relationships with Hess Memorial Hospital (which adjoins the clinic) and visiting consultants in many specialties. Longtime WREN member Leon Radant, MD is the WREN clinician champion at Mile Bluff. Janell Haske, RN is the practice facilitator, and Lisa Kietzer is the WREN PEEA assisting this clinic. Mile Bluff is scheduled to launch the *Complexity in Family Practice* study soon, with the *Quality of Life and Depression in Hypertensive Patients* study to follow.



Mile Bluff Clinic

LAKE TOMAH CLINIC

Rod Erickson, MD of the Lake Tomah Clinic has been a WREN member since the early 1990s. He is now the WREN champion at this clinic as he brings clinic staff and providers on board to begin implementing research projects as a WREN full support clinic. Laura Smith, RN, BSN will serve as the on site practice facilitator for WREN studies, and Peggy O'Halloran is the PEEA assigned to the clinic.



Lake Tomah Clinic

The Lake Tomah Clinic is a Franciscan Skemp clinic that is part of the Mayo Health System. The clinic is one of only two in Tomah, so they serve many of the city's residents, including the large military population that resides in the area. In September, the clinic began the WREN study, *Complexity in Family Practice*, and has already completed several study encounters.

PROJECT UPDATES

Complexity in Family Practice: A WREN Study

The aim of this study is to investigate the relationship between the number of medical problems per hour (problem density) and the likelihood of medical error in family practice clinics. Since July, progress has been made towards the goal of enrolling 30 clinicians and 600 patient encounters to this study. Principal investigator Jon Temte, MD, PhD, conducted study training with staff at Lake Tomah Clinic and data collection began at that clinic in September. Two other WREN full support clinics are gearing up for the study, with training scheduled this month. The UW Health Wingra clinic has been collecting data since June. Preliminary results will be presented by Dr. Temte at the annual North American Primary Care Research Group (NAPCRG) meeting in Vancouver this October, and shared with participants at the WREN Primary Care Research Forum on November 1st and 2nd.

What are Important Issues for Low Literate Adults? A Focus Group Evaluation of Health Literacy Issues

In collaboration with Wisconsin Literacy, Inc. and three community-based Wisconsin literacy councils, WREN staff conducted six focus groups of low literate adults to explore how low literacy impacts their health and health care. All six focus groups have been transcribed, and currently, sessions are being analyzed to identify major and minor themes. Analysis will be completed in early November and prepared for publication as well as presentation to the literacy councils and other interested parties later this year.

WREN FEATURE PROJECT

New Study looks at Depression and Treatment Compliance in Hypertension

One of WREN's newest projects, *Quality of Life and Depression as Determinants of Treatment Adherence in Hypertensive Patients*, will be starting at Osceola Medical Center and the UW Health Odana Atrium, McFarland, and Monona clinics this fall. Leonelo Bautista, MD, MPH, DrPh, of the UW-Madison Department of Population Health Sciences, the project's principal investigator, is working with WREN staff to identify additional clinics to participate in the study.

This study is designed to assess whether symptoms of depression and lower quality of life affect the likelihood that patients will continue to take their antihypertensive medication. Some of the components of quality of life that we will measure are general sense of well-being, sleeping problems, sexual symptoms, and the presence of physical symptoms like headache, cough, and dizziness.

We will recruit 280 hypertensive patients about to start drug treatment and will follow them for one year. They will complete a questionnaire about depression symptoms and quality of life at the start of treatment and 3, 6, 9, and 12 months later. We will also measure their adherence to treatment.

If depression symptoms and quality of life are related to treatment withdrawal, then we could use this information to identify patients that are more likely to stop treatment as well as to design interventions to prevent non-adherence. If we can improve treatment compliance, then we will be able to prevent a considerable amount of heart attacks and strokes among people with hypertension.

In addition to assisting Dr. Bautista with the identification of clinics to serve as study sites, WREN staff will support this study in a number of other ways. Cindy Colombo will assist with overall study coordination including training of clinic staff and patient selection. PEEAs Lisa Kietzer and Peggy O'Halloran will support the WREN clinics to which they are assigned with clinic specific issues related to study implementation.

PROJECT UPDATES

Educating Physicians in the Value and Use of BMI to Reduce Overweight and Obesity

The purpose of this study, launched in April 2007, is to test the significance of a body mass index (BMI) toolkit in application toward patients' weight control and obesity reduction. To date, the toolkits, called Americans in Motion (AIM), have been distributed and the first survey of WAFP and WREN members is complete. Data analysis of the first survey results is in progress and the response of WREN members (37.9%) was greater than the response of WAFP members (19.6%) ($p < 0.0001$).



The second survey will be concluded in December. Results will be used to determine the perceived usefulness of the tool kit and will guide future efforts to disseminate obesity and patient activity level research findings.

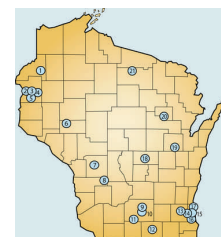
The Awareness and Use of Nasal Irrigation Among Family Medicine Physicians in Wisconsin

Chronic sino-nasal complaints are common, expensive, associated with significant impact on quality of life, and are often refractory to standard care. Nasal saline irrigation is a promising complementary therapy for a variety of sino-nasal conditions. This study aims to assess awareness, prescribing patterns, and satisfaction with nasal irrigation among family medicine physicians in Wisconsin using an electronically distributed survey to approximately 1800 physicians who are members of WAFP and WREN.

Over the summer, WREN staff assisted with the development and launch of the survey using the Zoomerang online service. Principal investigator David Rabago and members of the study team are now analyzing data. Study results could inform both practice guidelines and planning for further clinical trials.

Wisconsin Initiative to Promote Healthy Lifestyles (WIPHL)

WIPHL is a federally funded screening, brief intervention, referral and treatment services (SBIRT) program designed to address substance abuse in Wisconsin. Program service delivery began in March of this year, and already nearly 20,000 patients have completed WIPHL brief screens across the state. Of those, about one-third, or 6,000 patients, screened positive on an alcohol or drug question, and 1,300 have received additional follow-up services. WIPHL central staff and health educators and other staff from the 20 project clinics recently convened in Madison to celebrate these achievements, and to look ahead to plan for improving service delivery in the coming year.



WIPHL clinic sites

AZMATICS

AZMATICS (AZithroMycin Asthma Trial In Community Settings) is a clinical effectiveness trial of the azalide acrolide azithromycin as adjunctive therapy for asthma conducted in primary care practices nationwide. This trial is based on an emerging body of evidence for chronic *Chlamydia pneumoniae* infection in asthma, and builds upon positive results of a pilot trial that was successfully conducted by WREN.

About 50 subjects have now been randomized. Dr. David Hahn and Mike Grasmick will be presenting a poster on this study at the annual NAPCRG meeting in Vancouver this fall. Cindy Colombo, WREN Practice Enhancement and Education Associate, has joined the AZMATICS team to handle survey deployment and tracking.

Physicians and potentially eligible patients who are interested in learning more about AZMATICS may contact Dr. David Hahn, the principal investigator, at dlhahn@wisc.edu or david.hahn@deancare.com.

NEW STAFF PROFILES

Cindy Colombo

This July, Cindy Colombo began working as a Practice Enhancement and Education Assistant for WREN. Cindy works out of the Madison office, and currently is assisting with the implementation of the AZMATICs study, as well as working with principal investigator Leonelo Bautista to get his study, *Quality of Life and Depression as Determinants of Treatment Adherence in Hypertensive Patients*, off the ground at several WREN clinics.

Since 1999, Cindy has worked for the UW-Madison on several research studies, beginning with a study that examined psychopathy in female offenders conducted by the Department of Psychology. In 2002, Cindy was hired at the Department of Family Medicine to work on the study, *Opioid Addiction in Pri-*

mary Care Chronic Pain Patients. She next worked as a lead interviewer and research specialist for the College Health Intervention Projects (CHIPs). Her familiarity with the UW and the Department of Family Medicine has made for an easy transition to her work with WREN.

Cindy is originally from Wisconsin, and has lived in Madison for about 15 years. In addition to her position with WREN, Cindy is completing the MS program in Rehabilitation Psychology at the UW-Madison. She has a BA in Psychology and Criminology from the University of New Mexico.



Adina Tucker

With an increase in WREN staff, membership, and funding in 2007 has come the need for additional office support. Beginning in October, that need will



be met with the addition of Adina Tucker to the WREN team. Adina will help manage the administrative side of WREN business as a program assistant housed in the DFM offices in Madison. In the coming weeks, in addition to orienting herself to WREN processes and pro-

jects, she will help to coordinate the upcoming WREN research forum scheduled for November 1st and 2nd.

Adina is a Madison native, who has spent the majority of her professional life working with children, young adults, and adults with developmental disabilities. More recently, she was employed as the office manager and sales representative for a small insurance agent's office. In this position, she had several clients who were deaf or hard of hearing, prompting her to learn American Sign Language. In her free time, Adina loves to travel, read, and attend the theater.

Katie Pronschinske

Katie Pronschinske has been hired as the Milwaukee area WREN Practice Enhancement and Education Assistant (PEEA). With Katie on board, WREN will work to identify WREN full support clinic candidates in that area of the state, which will allow us to increase the diversity of the patient populations we include in WREN efforts.

Katie grew up in Waukesha, WI and attended the University of Wisconsin – Madison. She graduated with a major in Clinical Laboratory Science and received her certification as a Medical Technologist through the American Society for Clinical Pathology. Most recently, she has been working as a Clinical Laboratory Scientist at The Johns Hopkins Hospital in Baltimore, Maryland, working in the Oncology, Chemistry and Critical Care laboratories.

At Johns Hopkins, Katie most enjoyed working directly with oncology patients and assisting the providers with the bone

marrow procedure. She says, "It gave me a great opportunity to meet and spend time with patients, a rare opportunity for Clinical Laboratory Scientists." Also while in Maryland, Katie volunteered for the University of Maryland Shock Trauma Center where she spent numerous Saturday nights observing and helping out in the STC's Resuscitation Unit and operating rooms.

Katie's return to Wisconsin comes with a change in career path. She is excited to learn the ins and outs of clinical and practice based research through her new position with WREN. While not focusing on her new career, Katie enjoys ice skating on frozen Wisconsin lakes, traveling just about anywhere, and cheering on the Wisconsin Badgers.



WREN Steering Committee

Dennis Baumgartner, MD, St. Luke's Family Practice Center (General Member Representative, Steering Committee Chair)

Jim Davis, MD, MS, UW Department of Family Medicine (UW Department of Family Medicine Interim Chair)

Rod Erickson, MD, Lake Tomah Clinic (General Member Representative)

Kari Lathrop-Capaul, MD, Affinity Medical Group (General Member Representative and Steering Committee Chairperson Elect)

Mary Beth Plane, PhD, UW Department of Family Medicine (UW Department of Family Medicine Director of Research Services)

Ken Schellhase, MD, Medical College of Wisconsin (MCW Department of Family and Community Medicine Representative)

Eric Schoville, BA, UW Department of Family Medicine (UW Department of Family Medicine Information Services Representative)

Paul Smith, MD, UW Department of Family Medicine, UW Health Belleville Clinic (WREN Director)

Jon Temte, MD, PhD, UW Department of Family Medicine, UW Health Wingra Family Medical Center (UW Department of Family Medicine Representative and Steering Committee Secretary)

Paul Treder, APNP, Waushara Family Physicians (General Member Representative)

STEERING COMMITTEE MEETING SUMMARY SEPTEMBER 15, 2007

The WREN Steering Committee met on September 15, 2007. Topics of discussion included new WREN staff, the WREN partnership with CUPH through the hire of PEEA Katie Pronschinske, increasing WREN presence in Milwaukee, the hire of Adina Turner as WREN program assistant, project updates, and WREN website changes.

Also, the group discussed the role of the WREN Advisory Committee. Because the Advisory Committee is selected by the DFM Chair with WREN input, the committee decided to table the composition of the Advisory Committee until new DFM Chair, Valerie Gilchrist is in place. The next meeting will be held at 8:00 a.m. on November 1, 2007 at the Wilderness Resort Hotel, Wisconsin Dells prior to the Primary Care Research Forum.

MEMBERSHIP UPDATE

Beginning in July, WREN launched a Zoomerang survey to verify and update its membership files. Approximately half of past WREN members responded to continue with their membership. After the survey launch, we discovered that some members have not been able to access or complete Zoomerang surveys. As a result, we will be contacting remaining members to see if they wish to be a General (\$50 annual fee with voting rights) or Affiliate (free with no voting rights) member of WREN.

NETWORK COORDINATOR IN THE NEWS

A presentation by Mike Grasmick, PhD, WREN network coordinator, to the Madison agency Literacy Network was featured in an article, *Limited Literacy Called Hazardous to Health*, in the Capitol Times on September 6th. Mike spoke to the Literacy Network about a WREN focus group project (see project updates, page 4) examining health issues for low literate adults.

You can read the article in its entirety at <http://www.madison.com/archives/read.php?ref=/tct/2007/09/06/0709060397.php>

LOOKING AHEAD: WREN CONVOCATION MAY 1 – 2

On May 1 and 2, 2008, WREN will hold its annual convocation of practices at the Great Wolf Lodge in Wisconsin Dells. At this meeting, we will define and prioritize areas of research interest with the help of a facilitator. This meeting provides WREN members with the opportunity to give input into how we prioritize projects as we get approached for WREN participation in the future.

We encourage all individual WREN members to attend and WREN practices to send a representative. Funding is available to offset most of the cost for many WREN members and WREN practices to send at least one representative to the meeting. We will send additional meeting and registration information early next year.

The WREN review is published quarterly. If you have questions or article suggestions please contact Peggy O'Halloran at peggy.ohalloran@fammed.wisc.edu or 715-855-2057