The Center for Integrative Medicine (CIM) is a multi-specialty clinic in West Michigan funded jointly by Spectrum Health and Network 180, Kent County’s community mental health authority. Services include a program for pregnant women, addiction-stabilization services, extensive health care coordination, and linkages to social services.

- **Population:** CIM services are offered to individuals within the Spectrum Health network who have 10 or more ED visits in two of the last three years. Currently, more than 400 patients are enrolled. Most patients have Medicaid or Medicare, a smaller number are privately insured, and 17 percent are uninsured.

- **Delivery Model:** CIM has a number of different teams, including an intake team, consisting of a physician, licensed master of social work (LMSW) and a medical assistant (MA); a pain and addiction team, staffed by a physicians’ assistant (PA) and master of social work (MSW); and a complex medical team, also led by a PA and MSW. Upon enrolling in the program, the teams meet and evaluate patients, typically meeting with them four to five times over five weeks. Patients’ biopsychosocial issues are identified, and care plans are created that include interventions such as mindfulness meditation to help manage chronic pain, addiction treatment, care for chronic or complex medical conditions, mental health services, and aggressive assistance with social services focused on helping patients find reliable housing. A 2011 trial analyzing 100 super-utilizer patients receiving CIM care found that the program reduced ED visits by 63 percent, a reduction maintained for more than a year. Health care costs for the group were reduced by $2.7 million. The net effect compared to controls is still under investigation.

- **Financing:** Spectrum Health and Network 180 were the initial financial supporters of the program, covering start-up costs as well as providing in-kind staff support in the form of MSWs. CIM currently uses an “episode of care” payment model to charge for services. This provides the majority of funding required for the clinic. CIM also works with Spectrum Health’s integrated health plan, Priority Health, which funds its efforts through a per member per month payment.

**KEYS TO SUCCESS**

1. **Involving patients.** When a patient experiences a positive outcome as a result of working with the program, teams conduct a deep evaluation that includes the patient’s perspective on what worked, what failed, and why, so that these discoveries can be applied to other cases.

2. **Customizing interventions.** Dr. Waller has described the CIM’s service model as an old-fashioned equalizer with many “knobs:” one for housing, one for transportation, another for psychiatric care, and yet another for pain management, and so on. The staff work to understand which variables need to be tweaked to provide the best results under which circumstances.

3. **Learning from mistakes.** Procedures or activities that fail to help patients are openly discussed and reviewed as a team so that the program learns from mistakes and avoids repeating them.
Spotlight: Building a Replicable Program

As hard as Dr. Waller is working to make the Center for Integrative Medicine (CIM) succeed, he is also identifying ways to make his role less important. He takes a systems-based approach to designing and honing CIM’s program so that, as he puts it, “when we are done, I can put this in a box and hand it to someone else and it will work for them, too.” He wants CIM’s promising patient outcomes to be replicable anywhere the model gets adopted. Part of this will be achieved through a planned randomized controlled trial to be conducted by the Massachusetts Institute of Technology’s Abdul Latif Jameel Poverty Action Lab (J-PAL) to determine what components of the program are most effective.

A more informal process of identifying successful interventions involves careful monitoring of CIM’s work with patients. Dr. Waller and his team observe what is done with each patient, how positive outcomes are achieved, and how change is accomplished, as well as mistakes and gaps in services or care. “We do not want to turn this into manufacturing,” he explains, “but we want to build this so that there’s an appropriate pathway to succeed with 100 percent of our patients.” To aid these efforts, he relies heavily on the Lean Six Sigma methodology.

The learning process includes identifying key issues that may affect patients on a policy level. Beyond fine-tuning the clinic’s day-to-day formula for achieving its objectives, he also advocates for agile health policies that will allow care and social service providers to help people create healthier, more secure lives.

BEHIND THE INNOVATION

R. Corey Waller, MD, MHS, is creator, founder, and medical director of Spectrum Health Medical Group’s Center for Integrative Medicine, a multi-specialty clinic that uses a new model of care to treat patients with histories of frequent emergency department use in West Michigan. He is also Spectrum’s medical staff chief for the division of pain management.

PROFILES IN INNOVATION SERIES FROM THE COMPLEX CARE INNOVATION LAB

These profiles highlight the organizations and individuals participating in the Center for Health Care Strategies’ Complex Care Innovation Lab. The Innovation Lab, made possible by Kaiser Permanente Community Benefit, is bringing together innovative organizations from across the country working to improve care for vulnerable populations with complex medical and social needs. Participants are exploring new ways to advance complex care delivery at the local, state, and national level. For more information, visit www.chcs.org.