



## ADVANCING INTEGRATED HEALTHCARE

### IMPROVING PRIMARY CARE – SPECIALIST COLLABORATION

*“Are you tired of the chaos and stress of scrambling to gather patient information while the referred patient was in the exam room waiting to be seen? Have you ever received a referral summary that didn’t answer the question you wanted answered?”*

#### The Opportunity:

The Clinical Strategy Committee of the Care Transformation Collaborative of RI has endorsed an ongoing effort to improve primary care – specialist collaboration. This committee includes representatives of RI Systems of Care, primary care practices, health plan clinical leaders, Medicaid, and OHIC. We have access to a systematic program developed by the American College of Physicians (ACP) in collaboration with specialty and primary care practices and patient advocates. An initial effort with this program occurred last year. We plan to build on this experience for a phase two project in RI to help practices implement changes which benefit everyone involved — the specialist practice, referring clinicians, and patients alike. We would also like to help establish clear statewide standards for primary care – specialist collaboration. The ACP program is comprised of 4 Action Steps which have been demonstrated to improve referral and care coordination processes. As part of planning for this effort, we would like to engage specialist thought leaders in helping to craft the collaborative. We anticipate a few planning meetings with a goal to start the project in summer 2020. Below is an overview of the program as developed by the ACP.

Studies indicate that 60-70% of referrals contain inadequate information, leading to frustration for both the patient and the care team. It can also increase the cost of care due to unnecessary duplicative testing. Both primary and specialty care practices have noted that the referral process is one of the most disruptive pain points in their daily operations.

#### High-Level Overview of ACP Program Action Steps to Connected Care:

- **Action Step 1:** Overview and Practice Process Assessment – Learn the importance of building a strong and effective referral process, and start by understanding the strengths and weaknesses in your own referral processes.
- **Action Step 2:** Get What You Need – Ensure that you get the essential information which you need in a referral request to perform a successful consultation.
- **Action Step 3:** Ensure Others Get What They Need – Learn the importance of closing the loop for both patients and referring clinicians, and develop effective ways to do so.
- **Action Step 4:** Care Coordination Agreements – Build a functioning care coordination agreement between a specialty and referring practice.