

PPOC member update

January 19, 2018

Dear Colleague,

I would like to start my monthly update by sharing the wonderful news that Dr. Louis Vernacchio, who has been serving as the PPOC's Interim Chief Medical Officer since Dr. Glenn Focht's departure in early November, has accepted the role on a long-term basis. Louis has been fully committed to the PPOC's mission, strategy, programming and transition to the THPP ACO, and his performance as Interim CMO has been outstanding. Shortly after Glenn's departure, Louis became entirely engaged in all aspects of our clinical quality endeavors to ensure that we had no loss of momentum in our existing programs and that our new initiatives continued their development. I am extremely confident in his leadership skills and expertise to make sure that our organization builds on its years of clinical excellence. Louis plans to continue his clinical practice at Longwood Pediatrics and serve as the PPOC's Chief Medical Officer-splitting his time 50/50. With the assistance of our Director of Quality Improvement, Tammy Cole-Poklewski and the rest of our excellent quality improvement staff, I know that Louis and the department will be incredibly effective in the coming years.

Louis received his B.A. from Georgetown University in 1988, followed by his M.D. from the Johns Hopkins University School of Medicine in 1993; he completed his residency at Boston Children's Hospital in 1996 and earned his M.Sc. in Epidemiology from Boston University in 2001. He has been a practicing primary-care pediatrician at Longwood Pediatrics since 1996, and a member of the PPOC since its inception in 1999. He became a member of the PPOC staff in 2008 when he accepted the role of Director of Research and Analysis. He has served as the PPOC's Interim Chief Medical Officer since November 2017.

In addition to continuing the momentum towards continuous quality improvement that Glenn led during his tenure as CMO, Louis intends to focus on taking full advantage of our new network-wide installation of Epic to bring a data-driven approach to quality improvement and to make it easier for clinicians to do the right thing for patients efficiently and effectively at the point of care. Due to Louis's ongoing clinical commitments, he will have less opportunity for onsite practice visits than Glenn had, but he intends to develop a system of regional Associate Medical Directors who can provide local support to members and practice leadership teams in the various PPOC regions.

Organizational Goals

At our December 2017 Board of Directors meeting, the Board approved the organizational goals for FY 2018. These objectives are an important addition to the work we do every day. They allow us to focus on specific initiatives over the year, and help guide our work helping you serve children around the Commonwealth.

Quality Improvement

We are preparing for the implementation of the Tufts Health Together with Boston Children's ACO by March, and working actively with CHICO and THPP to build a network of specialists and supports for your practices. This is a large task, but in tandem, we will be pursuing other quality initiatives. By the end of 2018, we will

create a practice reporting framework and roll out regionally-based management programs to improve Total Medical Expense (TME) performance in both ED utilization and Specialty utilization. These are both areas where PPOC network spend is high and we feel that there are excellent opportunities to decrease utilization while improving care. Our quality improvement team will work directly with you to help you bring these costs down.

We will also endeavor to improve performance by 10% on all payer performance targets for practices in Epic Waves 1-3 for:

- Well Child Measures ages 3-6
- Well Child Measures ages 12-21
- Broadband behavioral health screening.

With these three goals, we begin using data derived directly from Epic to manage clinical quality. Unlike the claims data we've depended on in the past, the Epic information will be much timelier and will more accurately reflect clinical care processes.

Information Technology

The PPOC IT team is not slowing down this year either, as we have two more waves of Epic implementation to complete our network-wide installation. Other items on our list for this year include completing the integration of claims from both Blue Cross Blue Shield and MassHealth by the end of FY' 2018 so that we can correlate our care processes with the cost and develop new insights into the most effective ways to make care more affordable to families.

Over the next year, we will be upgrading our version of Epic, and planning that process is a 2018 goal. We will also be implementing two-factor authentication for PPOC providers this year. That security enhancement will improve the security of our system and will enable electronic transmission of stimulant prescriptions from our offices. We will continue our work to enhance practice management reporting for the practices. Lastly, we will be implementing the Hierarchical Condition Category (HCC) tool in Epic by the end of the fiscal year. HCC is a feature in the EHR which will help clinicians select the most appropriate ICD-10 code during a clinical encounter so that we can accurately capture the clinical conditions of our patients.

General and Administrative

Boston Children's Hospital is refining its strategic relationship with the PPOC, and we will be actively participating in that work. Jessica Farnham and I are very involved in that project on a regular basis.

As of January 1, we welcomed four new practices, expanding our reach to the Berkshires. We continue to receive many requests for membership from new practices in all parts of the Commonwealth. Like any successful organization, we need to ensure that the growth of the network enhances our ability to meet our mission and that we don't grow so quickly that the organization is distracted from its core work. Therefore, by the end of the first quarter, we will decide which new practices are best suited to join the PPOC in the coming year.

We have two scheduled PPOC Member Meetings this year. We will be hosting both of these at the Babson Executive Conference Center, with satellite host sites in the western and southeastern parts of the state. All practices must send at least one provider to these meetings. Please save the dates for these meetings from 6:30 to 9 AM:

- Wednesday April 11, 2018
- Friday October 26, 2018

We have our work cut out for us in 2018, but we have an extremely capable and talented team of more than 80 PPOC staff working towards these goals. Our team is poised to work effectively with your practice in achieving all of these initiatives. I welcome any feedback or questions you have regarding our organizational goals. We want the PPOC's work to be transparent, and we want everyone to be on board to enable the continued success of the organization.

Most Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'G. Young', written in a cursive style.

[Gregory J. Young, MD](#)

President and Chief Executive Officer
PPOC