Database Created by UA Fellow Improves Veterans' Access to Health Care

College of Medicine ? Phoenix
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A database created by a clinical informatics fellow at the University of Arizona College of Medicine ? Phoenix is drastically improving health care for Phoenix veterans by targeting the location of the VA's mobile medical unit.

Dr. Christopher Hollweg conducted a data analysis to determine high-need areas for the Phoenix VA's mobile medical unit. Hollweg began his research in January 2017, and now the mobile medical unit has treated more than 1,500 veterans and provided 2,000 vaccinations, as well as other services.

The mobile unit started as an immunization clinic. Since then, it has been expanded to include a health promotion and disease prevention clinic, as well specialty clinics, including a diabetes clinic and physical medicine and rehabilitation clinic.

"Everything from the way we contact these patients to the logistics of where we park the unit is entirely data driven," Hollweg said. "There is a 250 percent increase in veterans showing up for immunizations, and we are now able to provide more services because of these data-driven methods."

According to Hollweg, the unit has increased vaccination rates by 15 percent in a single day for targeted areas.

"The patient satisfaction has been astounding," Hollweg said. "They love how we come right into their community, increasing access, especially for those who have a difficult time leaving the house."

The clinical informatics fellowship is a two-year program at the College of Medicine ? Phoenix that arose from the need for clinicians to be integrally involved with the appropriate use of technology to increase the safety and value of the care of patients, families and populations.

"I went into clinical informatics for the reason I believe most did. It stemmed from my own frustrations as a practicing physician and my knowledge of what resources were available to better address these challenges," Hollweg said. "The solutions put in place create safer care that is of higher quality and more efficient. Through this field, I feel my impact is much greater than me seeing one patient at a time."

"It's an impact that can help thousands of patients at once and even improve the work-life of my fellow physicians and the health care system as a whole," he added.

Hollweg obtained his medical degree and a master's in public health from St. George's
University in Grenada. He completed his residency in pediatrics at Richmond University Medical Center on Staten Island, New York, and is currently pursuing a master’s in biomedical informatics at Oregon Health & Science University. He graduated from the College of Medicine ? Phoenix clinical informatics fellowship in June.

A version of this article [3] originally appeared on the College of Medicine ? Phoenix website.

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