Recruitment Summary
Virtual Home Visit Pilot Program

Executive Summary
This document summarizes the key findings and lessons learned from the initial recruitment phase of the Virtual Home Visit Pilot Program. This document will outline both the successes and challenges of patient recruitment and inform best practices to improve recruitment, patient show rate, and patient experience for the Pilot Program.

Overview
Recruitment for the Virtual Home Visit (VHV) Pilot Program began on January 3, 2020 at three IMPACT DC Asthma Clinic sites. The aims of this initial recruitment phase were to trial our developed recruitment and virtual home visit protocols and ultimately better understand the strengths and weaknesses of our workflow. In the month of January, nine patients were approached to schedule a VHV, seven patients were successfully scheduled for a VHV appointment, and two patients successfully completed a VHV. This trial period allowed for the project team to better understand the best recruitment processes to follow for the remainder of the pilot.

The team was successful in developing accurate recruitment criteria to correctly identify and recruit IMPACT DC patients that can most benefit from the VHV services. We faced challenges in achieving a high patient show rate due (in part) to technical issues with the telehealth platform, Zoom. However, this experience will inform our practices moving forward as we will emphasize in-person patient recruitment, review and test the Zoom video/audio with patients, and develop a one-page document for patients outlining program expectations and outcomes.

Successes
Recruitment Criteria
The inclusion criteria developed by the project team has been proven successful in capturing a high volume of patients that are eligible for the Virtual Home Visit services. The criteria for patient recruitment are listed below:

- D.C. resident
- One major housing trigger
  - Major housing trigger: Extremely old carpeting, pests, mold, active leak, structural damage, vents with replacement need, etc.
- Self-identified remediation need
- High priority:
  - Age 4-17
  - Diagnosis of persistent asthma
  - More than one major housing trigger
  - Southeast D.C. resident
  - Resident/owner of single family home
Within the initial two weeks of patient recruitment, the project team was able to identify nine eligible families that were interested in scheduling Virtual Home Visit appointments. As we aim to complete an average of two Virtual Home Visits per week from March to December 2020, our initial recruitment numbers indicate strong patient volumes to achieve this goal.

Patient Identification

The identification and initial approach of eligible patients for the Virtual Home Visit services have been successful due to the existing comprehensive IMPACT DC clinical evaluation and the training provided to IMPACT DC staff to screen for eligible patients. The current IMPACT DC clinical evaluation includes a screening of patients with asthma for substandard housing conditions such as mold, pests, carpeting, ventilation, etc. to easily identify patients who may benefit from home remediation. In addition, staff members have been appropriately trained with resources and materials to recruit patients and communicate with the project lead who schedules all VHV appointments. Through this method, patients have been effectively identified, recruited and scheduled for Virtual Home Visits.

Challenges

Patient Retention

Despite the high volume of recruited and scheduled patients, it was challenging to ensure a high appointment show-rate. Out of the seven patients scheduled for a Virtual Home Visit, two patients successfully completed their appointment – an approximate 30% show rate. There may be a few reasons for this – patients mentioned uncertainty about the benefits of the VHV, experienced technical issues utilizing the telehealth platform, or forgotten their appointment time. As the project team aims for a patient show rate that is 50% or greater, we see an opportunity to improve our recruitment strategies and communication with families.

Telehealth Technical Issues

Some patients experienced technical difficulties when using the telehealth platform, Zoom, which affected their ability to participate in a Virtual Home Visit. Two parents had difficulty utilizing the Zoom software without first downloading the mobile application, and one had expressed they did not have enough storage on their smartphone to download the Zoom app. A parent who completed a VHV initially had difficulty hearing the healthcare provider and housing specialists during the VHV, but the team was still able to conduct the visit with limited disruptions.

Lessons Learned

In-Person Scheduling

Moving forward, the project team will adjust practices to prioritize the recruitment and scheduling of patients in person. Currently, patients are initially recruited in person at the IMPACT DC clinic and each family receives a follow up phone call from the project lead to schedule the VHV. However, evidence and research suggests that medical appointments scheduled with patients in person
result in greater show rates. To implement this, the project lead will be available at the main IMPACT DC clinic site during clinic hours to schedule VHVs real-time with eligible patients. This new scheduling practice can also help ensure that parents/guardians have downloaded the Zoom application and understand the expectations and benefits of the Virtual Home Visit program.

Testing Zoom Video/Audio

In addition to ensuring families have downloaded the Zoom application, it is important to prioritize testing video and audio with each parent/guardian prior to their child’s Virtual Home Visit. This will help the parent/guardian feel more comfortable utilizing Zoom and limit the amount of unexpected technical difficulties during the VHV. Video and audio can be tested with each family either during the in-person scheduling or during the VHV appointment confirmation call (completed 2-4 days before the VHV).

Recruitment One-Pager (for patients)

It is important to effectively communicate the expectations, next steps and benefits of the Virtual Home Visit program to all eligible patients. Rather than solely relying on a recruitment script, we will develop a one-page document that simply explains what a family may expect in the upcoming weeks and months as a part of the Virtual Home Visit Program. This document will provide a standard program overview, answer any frequently asked questions, and serve as a physical reminder of the upcoming VHV appointment.