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Working Together for Wellness

***Wilderness Health Hosts Coordination of Care Roundtable in Grand Rapids***

[GRAND RAPIDS, MINNESOTA, September 30th, 2021] Grand Itasca Clinic & Hospital hosted the Wilderness Health “Coordination of Care Roundtable” on September 30th, 2021. More than twenty social workers, nurses, and care coordinators from hospitals and clinics across the Arrowhead of Minnesota attended.

Care Coordinators are the invisible partners to patients, helping pair them with services that support them while in the hospital and at home. Care coordinators make the work of doctors, nurse practitioners, mental health professionals, and others easier. They aim to make the patient experience seamless. The roundtable encouraged participants to share resources and best practices. They also created networks across the region.

Becca Colby, working in Clinic Care Coordination at Grand Itasca Clinic and Hospital, describes the value of the event: “Care coordinators have a unique role and varied experiences. We strive to help patients and their families navigate barriers and reduce stress when they are already ill or struggling, while being sure to meet them where they are at. Every day, every person you work with is different, so you never know what challenges will come your way. Sharing new approaches to problem solving and helpful resources with other care coordinators is extremely beneficial and uplifting!”

According to Katie Peck, a registered nurse and care navigator for Wilderness Health, “I wanted individuals to leave with their cup full -- knowing that they have support across the network. Too, we wanted to create a ripple effect, creating relationships and partnerships.” Peck coordinated the event with Michelle Hargrave and Zomi Bloom, also from Wilderness.

Attendees participated on zoom or in-person from as far as the St. Luke’s Chequamegon Clinic to the east and Rainy Lake Clinic to the North. They came from hospitals from metro areas like St. Luke’s in Duluth and critical access hospitals serving smaller communities like Ely, Bigfork, and Grand Marais.

According to Bloom, “Care coordination is the glue that holds healthcare together. Social workers, population health nurses, care coordinators -- no matter what title they hold -- you could just call them miracle workers. They help healthcare systems improve quality outcomes and support patients as they navigate complex systems of care.”

Bloom is program manager for the Wilderness telehealth program, which will make access to health care in rural Minnesota easier. Access to mental health services was the number one challenge identified in the roundtable.
 The program ended with a tour of the Kiesler Wellness Center in Grand Rapids. Kiesler is a resource for coordinators of care grappling with the burden of mental and behavioral health illness in their patients. The center provides a safe environment and support with the goal to reduce and prevent psychiatric and hospital admissions through community-based care.

***About Wilderness Health***

Wilderness Health is a collaborative of independent providers working together to improve health care in Northeast Minnesota and Northwest Wisconsin. Through smart strategies, such as shared services and accountable care organizations (ACOs), Wilderness Health will lead the transformation for rural health care systems. For more information, visit our website at: <https://wildernesshealthmn.org/>

