



Health

## *Drive Behavioral Changes that Reduce Variability in Care*

### **YOUR WORLD IS CHANGING**

Healthcare spending is growing fast around the globe, yet it's getting harder for providers like you to stay afloat. Rising healthcare costs are putting pressure on the entire industry. At the same time, many hospital systems are seeing revenue slow, or even decline. That's a daunting sustainability gap — and it's threatening to push you into survival mode.

It's hard to close this gap because the rules keep changing mid-game. When you think about shifting payment models, and all the recent regulatory changes, and even nontraditional competitors like Apple and Amazon, it's no surprise that you have questions about the future of your healthcare system.

This situation might sound bleak. But when there are challenges, there's also opportunity. In fact, the Advisory Board has identified twenty-two opportunities for healthcare systems like yours to reduce this sustainability gap. And the number-one item on this list is clinical variability.

Even if you've tightened up your revenue cycle management — even if you've contained costs by streamlining operations and reducing staff and adding technology — you won't be able to close this gap unless you address variability.

There are two critical factors you can tackle: the decisions your clinicians are making every day, and the engagement and preferences of your patients. Most hospital systems have tried to address these factors in some way. You may have established care management programs for high-risk patients. You may have created your own care guidelines to improve the decisions made by physicians, nurses, pharmacists, and the many other clinicians involved in care.

Yet that Advisory Board report was just published last year. So these disconnected programs aren't closing the gap. They aren't driving consistent care.

# Drive behavioral changes that reduce variability in care

Clinical variability can lead to inefficiencies, adverse events, increased lengths of stay, and higher mortality rates. In short, all quality indicators are affected.

## WHAT YOU CAN DO

You will not be able to close the sustainability gap if you focus on reducing costs alone. At some point you must begin to address the clinical side of the business, and that means reducing unwanted variability. This is a huge challenge because clinical care is rooted in a series of behaviors that are incredibly difficult to change — even when you want to do the right thing. But it's not impossible. The key is to make people trust and remember what you want them to do.

**Unwarranted care variation exists within most provider organizations, and represents a \$20M – \$30M (per \$1B in revenue) actionable savings opportunity for a typical organization.**

— Unwarranted Variations in Care:  
Origins and Approaches to Reduction  
Advisory Board, May 2017

## A BETTER WAY

### **What if you could ease the adoption of new care approaches?**

With better patient outcomes hanging in the balance, you need your clinicians to get on board with change — without overburdening them in the process.

### **What if you could align stakeholders with a common care playbook?**

Siloed approaches to care, coupled with disconnected solutions, make it hard to improve quality and efficiencies across the care continuum.

### **What if you could reinforce evidence-based care?**

Clinicians want to provide high-quality care to patients. But when they can't keep up with the volume of new and complex medical literature, they're at risk of making decisions based on outdated information.