

Why use the CAN Score tool?

Chronic disease and comorbidities are a national focus in health care. Goals formerly directed at “sick care” are being directed at “healthcare.” Proactive healthcare can be accomplished through planned and purposeful outreach by the nurse care manager.

Many Veterans have chronic disease and comorbidities that put them at high risk for health events that lead to emergency room visits, hospital admissions, and death. According to data from the *Patient Care Almanac* (3/19/15), Sierra Nevada Health Care System had 621 Veterans with a CAN score of 98-99. The CAN Score tool also reveals the total Emergency Room visits in a two year period for these Veterans was 1,654. Of those Veterans, 64% were not receiving Home-Based Primary Care, Palliative Care, or Home Telehealth. These important resources are offered by the VA and should be offered to Veterans who need them.

According to the Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality (AHRQ, 2015) “Primary care is the cornerstone of health care that is effective and efficient...” (para. 1). An essential element is to implement IT tools to improve the quality, efficiency, and effectiveness of patient care (AHRQ, 2015).

The Veterans Health Organization is leading change in evidence-based practice through its development of care management tools which include essential data to target care. The Department of Veterans Affairs outlines importance of the use of clinical decision support tools:

“proactively identify individual patients at risk for undesirable outcomes such as death, hospitalization, or preventable medical complications and identify specific interventions that are most likely to reduce risk” (Blueprint for Excellence, 2014)

Nurses are in a key position to contribute to this positive change in health care! In addition, utilization of the CAN tool will allow nurses to meet the goals outline in the My VA initiative, the ICARE values, and standard of care.

Auburn RNs have a positive experience using the CAN tool. It provides essential information at a glance that allows rapid review and targeted outreach. Our Veterans deserve and expect to get the best care available.