

# Evaluation of a Specialty Pharmacy Health Coaching Program

Dana Simonson, PharmD, BCPS; Marj Wittenborg RPh; Mallory Snyder PharmD, MS, MPH; Holly Wiest, MA; Ann McNamara, PharmD



## BACKGROUND

- Fairview Specialty Pharmacy provides comprehensive therapy management (TM) for patients
- Some patients have additional social, physical, psychological needs that may be unmet by a pharmacist or nurse
- A health coach is employed to address complex patient needs and positively influence social determinants of health
- Projected benefits of health coaching program for patients:
  - Holistic support for health and mental well-being
  - Identifying and overcoming barriers to healthy coping
  - Identifying additional resources for support

## OBJECTIVE

- Determine the impact of a health coach in patients who receive specialty pharmacy services as measured by:
  - Number of referrals to this program
  - Patient satisfaction and perceived impact on health
  - Impact on patient-reported depression scores, Patient Health Questionnaire (PHQ-9)

## METHODS

- Health coaching services were offered to patients during initial call or in response to a trigger such as:
  - Emotional distress
  - New chronic illness diagnosis
  - Life transition
  - Coping issues
  - Stress management
  - Desire to make lifestyle changes
  - End of life
  - Advanced care planning
  - Family concerns
- Initial outreach call:
  - Provided program overview
  - Confirmed interest
  - Determined focus area (Table 1)
  - Encouraged goal setting
  - Documented baseline PHQ-9 depression score
- Follow up calls focused on goals; referrals for services documented.
- Following 3<sup>rd</sup> call:
  - PHQ-9 given
  - Satisfaction survey mailed

## TABLES AND FIGURES

Table 1:  
Desired Areas of Focus

- Emotional/Spiritual Needs
- Lifestyle Changes
- Loss & Grief
- Stress Management

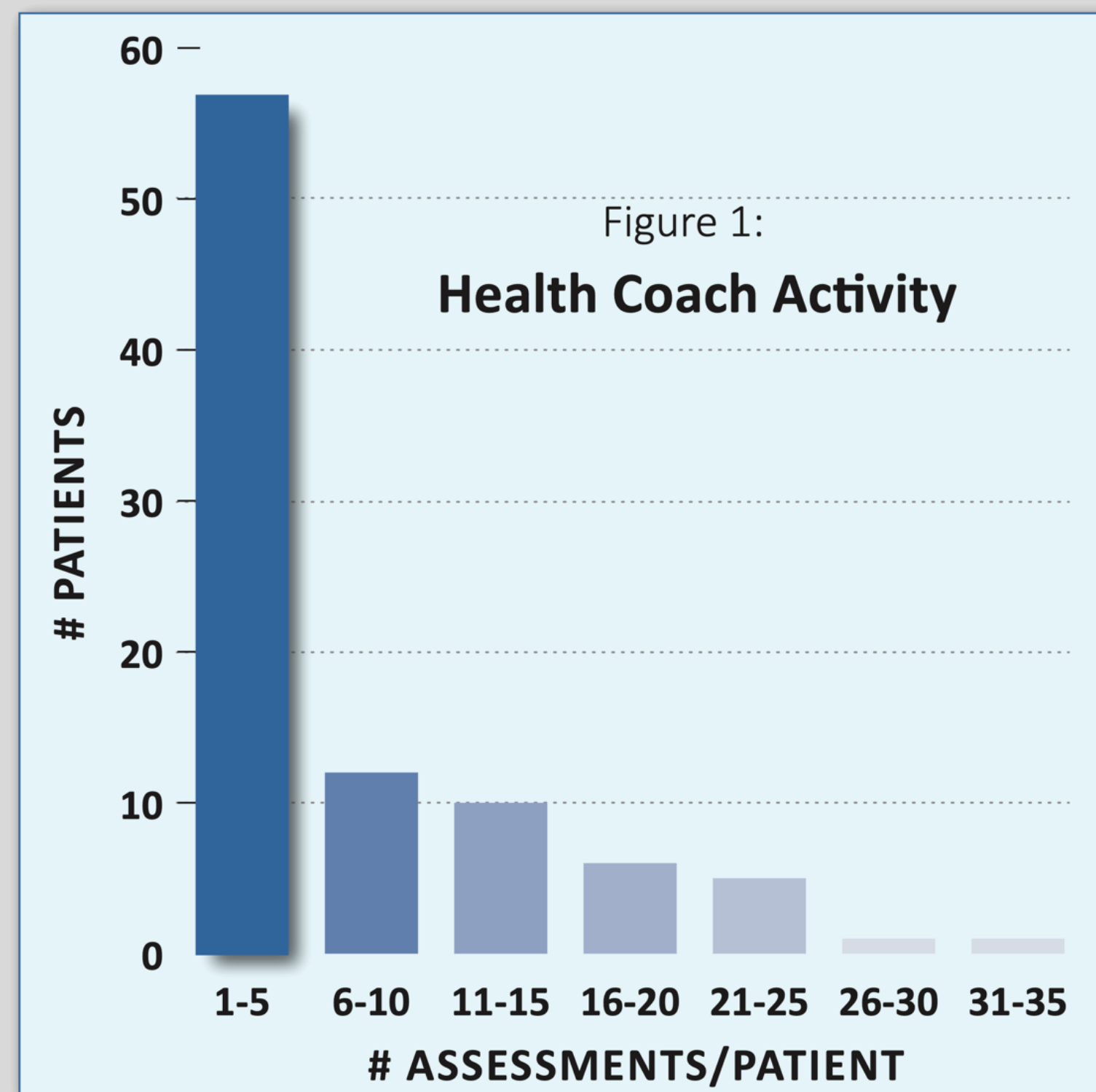


Table 2:  
Health Coach Focus Areas



Table 3:  
PHQ-9 Depression Score Key

0-4	Minimal or none
5-9	Mild
10-14	Moderate
15-19	Moderately Severe
20-27	Severe

Table 4:  
PHQ-9 Depression Scores: Baseline vs Post Session 3

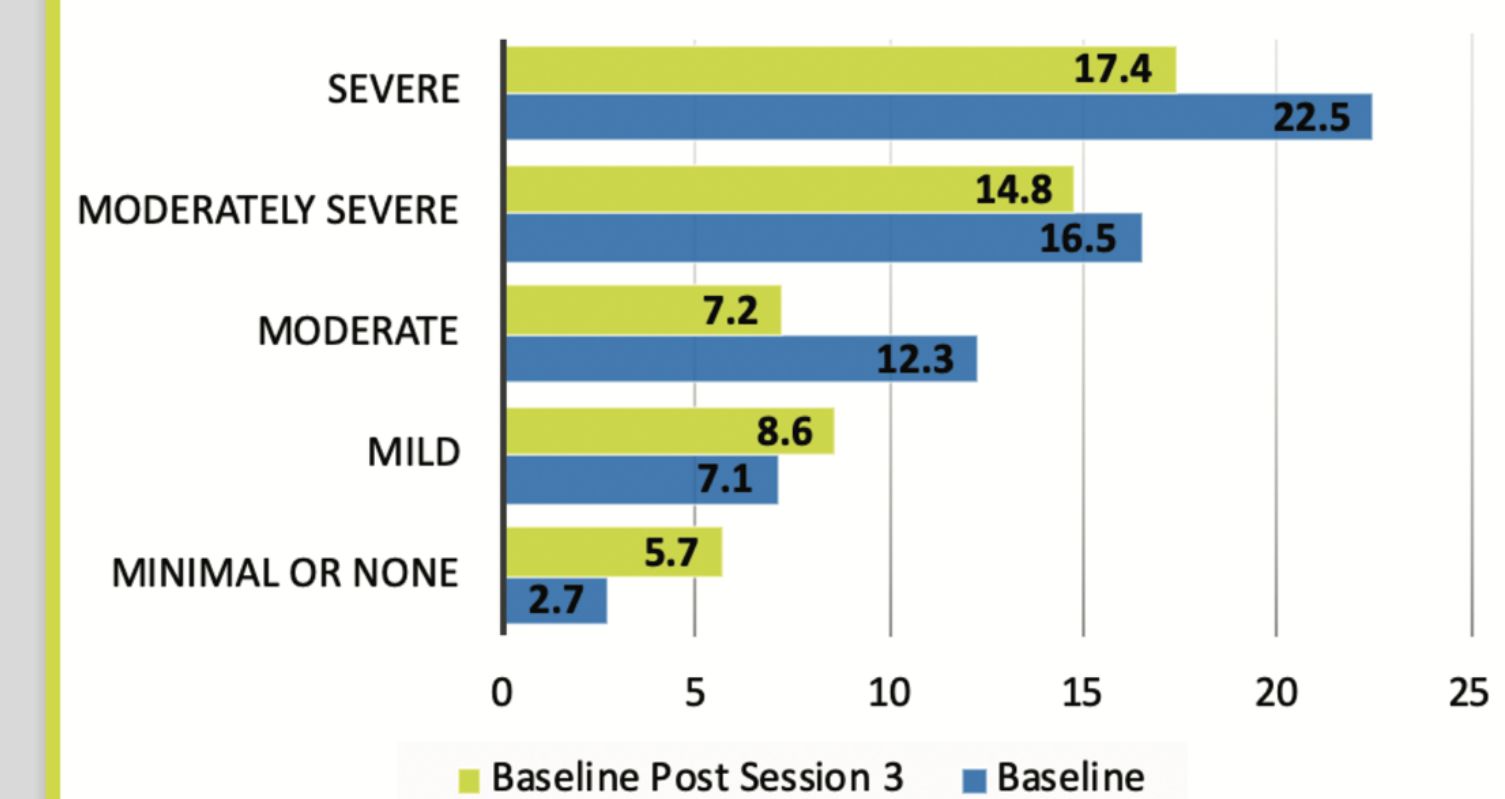


Figure 2:  
Health Coach Patient Experience Survey, n=21

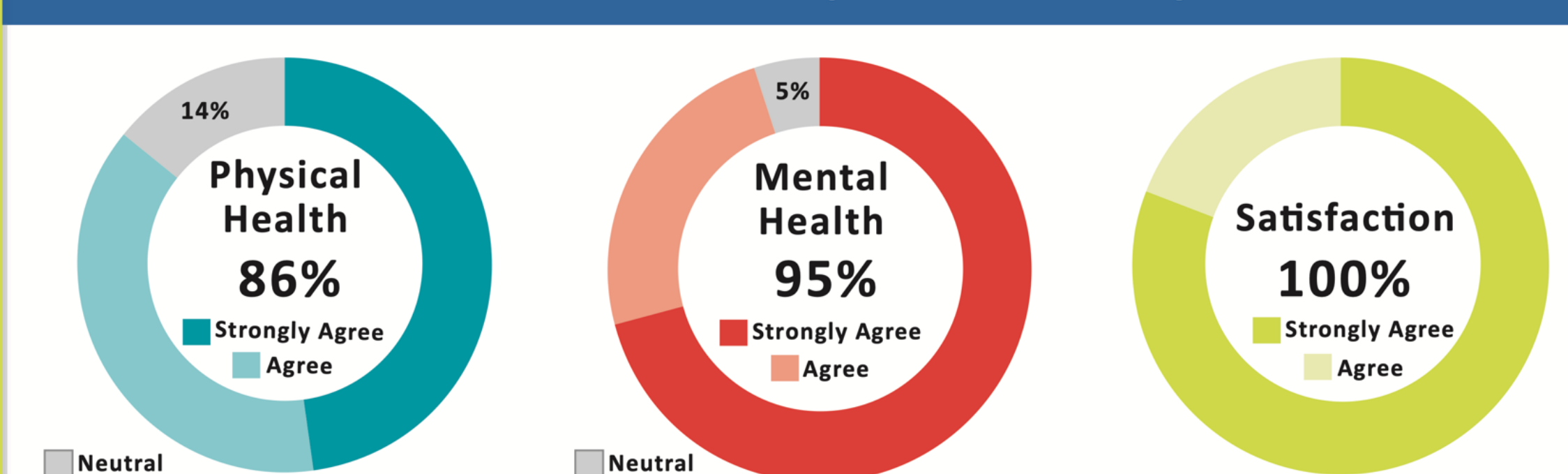


Table 5:  
Health Coach Additional Services Referrals

Referrals for Other Services	# Referrals
Support Group/Therapist	8
Social Worker/Case Manager/patient financial support	8
Physician Referrals	7
Psychologist/Psychiatrist	5
Other healthcare resource (Pain clinic, PT, OT, smoking cessation)	4
End of life support (hospice, advance care planning)	3
Family Resource	1
<b>Total Patient Referrals</b>	<b>36</b>

## RESULTS

- 623 health coaching assessments completed in 82 patients from 4/2016-1/2019 (Figure 1)
- Most common coaching focus (46% of patients) was emotional/spiritual and loss/grief (Table 2)
- PHQ-9 Depression Score was assessed in 54 patients at baseline and after session 3 (Tables 3 & 4):
  - Improvement occurred in 30 patients (56%)
  - In patients with baseline moderate to severe depression, 70% of patients experienced decreased depression
- Anonymous patient experience survey (n=21) revealed positive impact on patient health by working with health coach (Figure 2)
  - 86% strongly agreed or agreed that their physical health improved
  - 95% strongly agreed or agreed that their mental health improved
  - 100% strongly agreed or agreed that they were satisfied with this program
- Health coach referred 36/82 patients (44%) to additional services (Table 5)

## CONCLUSIONS

- This specialty pharmacy health coaching program was impactful as measured by:
  - High patient satisfaction
  - Positive patient perception of program impact on physical and mental health
  - Improved patient depression scores
  - Referrals to other resources
- Because the health coach program provides benefits beyond improving depression, we transitioned from measuring PHQ-9 to PROMIS-2, which evaluates and monitors physical, mental and social health.