

Meeting summary

Quick recap

The meeting focused on a detailed presentation by Suzanne Upfield, a nurse with 25 years of experience in cardiology, particularly in heart failure management. She explained the complexities of heart failure, its causes, types, and treatment options, emphasizing the importance of early intervention and regular follow-ups with healthcare providers. Suzanne highlighted the role of medications, lifestyle changes, and monitoring tools like the CardioMEMS device in managing heart failure. She also discussed the challenges of healthcare access, comorbidities, and the need for better coordination between primary care and specialists. The presentation aimed to educate attendees about heart failure, empower them to advocate for their health, and encourage proactive management of the condition.

Next steps

- Two volunteers: Sign up to bring snacks for the February meeting-Della Deagle, and Sandi Gruver.
- Michael: Post the PDF presentation on the website-Done
- Suzanne Upfield: Look into and send information about Medicare billing codes for telehealth/virtual visits
- Suzanne Upfield: Investigate possibility of donating pacemakers for veterinary use
- All members: Contact Suzanne Upfield (contact info provided) if they have questions or need heart failure resources-Posted under local resources our Website.
- Suzanne Upfield: Send a picture of the CardioMens device as an additional slide to the group

Summary

Heart Health Support Group Meeting

The meeting began with introductions, including Suzanne Upfield, a nurse with extensive experience in heart failure programs. Michael discussed the success of a recent luncheon and introduced new merchandise, including polo shirts and jackets, which can be purchased or obtained for free when signing up as a visitor. The group discussed plans for future meetings, including the need for volunteers to bring snacks for February and March. Several members shared their personal heart health experiences, emphasizing the

importance of the peer support group. The conversation ended with a brief overview of an upcoming presentation by Suzanne, who will provide a PowerPoint presentation with opportunities for questions and answers.

Heart Failure Management and Support

Suzanne, a nurse with 25 years of experience, discussed the growing prevalence and impact of heart failure, highlighting its complex nature and the need for effective management and community support. She emphasized the importance of patient education and peer support, noting that Mended Hearts plays a crucial role in empowering patients and their families. Suzanne also addressed the challenges of healthcare access, comorbidities, and lifestyle factors contributing to heart failure, and she explained the different types of heart failure, including systolic and diastolic, and their treatments. She concluded by discussing the signs and symptoms of heart failure and the need for better healthcare systems to support patients effectively.

Heart Failure Management and Treatment

Suzanne discussed the staging and classification of heart failure, emphasizing the importance of prevention and early treatment. She explained the diagnostic process, which includes medical history review, symptom assessment, chest X-ray, and echocardiogram, and highlighted the need to identify and treat the underlying causes. Suzanne stressed the importance of primary care in managing heart failure patients, as cardiologists do not treat comorbid conditions. She also described the role of medications in heart failure management, including ACE inhibitors, beta blockers, MRAs, and SGLT2 inhibitors, and emphasized the need for medication optimization to improve patient outcomes.

Heart Failure Management Strategies

Suzanne discussed strategies for managing heart failure symptoms and emphasized the importance of monitoring patients' baselines and encouraging them to reach out to primary care or cardiology when they deviate from their normal state. She highlighted the use of tools like the zone and spotlight tool to identify potential issues and the significance of exercise, medication adherence, and avoiding alcohol and tobacco. Suzanne also stressed the importance of flu and COVID-19 vaccinations, managing sodium intake, and maintaining regular appointments with healthcare providers to prevent hospitalizations.

Advocating for Heart Disease Patients

Suzanne discussed advocating for patients with chronic illnesses and emphasized the role of pharmacists as key resources for managing heart disease. She shared personal experiences with heart attacks and diabetes, highlighting the need for early detection and

treatment. Suzanne also addressed the connection between diabetes and heart disease, explaining how uncontrolled blood sugar can damage the vascular system. She encouraged attendees to monitor their health closely and seek regular medical follow-ups, particularly for conditions like heart failure.

Heart Health Monitoring and Prevention

Suzanne discussed the importance of regular medical check-ups, emphasizing the need for at least three appointments per year with a primary care physician or cardiologist. She clarified that while open-heart surgery does not directly cause heart failure, underlying conditions like coronary artery disease are the primary risk factors. Suzanne also explained the use of a new device called CardioMens, which helps monitor heart pressures and prevent complications in patients with heart failure. Additionally, she addressed the connection between sleep apnea and heart failure, highlighting the importance of CPAP machines in managing this condition.

Telehealth Transition and Patient Care

Suzanne discussed her role in transitioning from hospital to outpatient software and emphasized the importance of telehealth and virtual visits in managing healthcare costs and patient care. She addressed questions about pacemakers, AFib monitoring, and the differences between type 1 and type 2 diabetes. Suzanne also mentioned his willingness to assist patients and provide support, and she planned to follow up on concerns about billing codes for telehealth services and the potential for donating old pacemakers to veterinary services.