

**Title: Evaluating the Impact of High Risk Patient Outreach during the COVID-19 Pandemic**

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**Abstract:** The COVID-19 pandemic presented unprecedented challenges to primary care, including providing high quality care while limiting face-to-face encounters. During that time, many physicians adapted telemedicine as an integral part of their practice. Poorly controlled chronic diseases increase the risk of morbidity and mortality. In an attempt to minimize Emergency Department (ED) visits and hospitalizations, we proactively reached out to high risk patients to address their medical needs via telephone. **METHODS** During the COVID-19 pandemic, senior residents of St. Francis Family Medicine Residency called high risk patients (HCC risk score  $\geq 40$ ) to determine if they felt safe, had prescription needs, or an urgent request. Data analysis then assessed patients' responses and whether they were seen by a Bon Secours provider in 90 days prior to the phone call or had virtual/office visits, ED visits, or hospitalization after the phone call. **RESULTS** 197 out of 255 high risk patients were included, with 169 patients called, who were not already actively communicating with a physician. 104 patients answered. 100% felt safe, 12% needed a prescription, 9% had an urgent request, and 64% had a visit in the prior 90 days. After the phone call, 32% had a virtual visit, 11% had an office visit, 11% had an ED visit, and 5% had a hospitalization. Overall, 36% of the high risk patients were positively impacted. **CONCLUSION** Outreach during the COVID-19 pandemic minimized the amount of in-person contact and addressed the medical needs of the high risk patients at St. Francis Family Medicine clinic.