

Torres and Cape Hospital and Health Service telepharmacy service model

Allied Health Professions'
Office of Queensland

Background

Medication misadventure is a serious issue with 2-3% of all hospital admissions being medication-related, which equates to 230,000 per year in Australia. Additionally, up to 30% of admissions of patients over the age of 65 are medication-related. Federally funded Home Medicines Reviews (HMRs) conducted by pharmacists have been shown to be beneficial in improving quality use of medicines and overall health outcomes.

At the time of the service model trial in the Torres and Cape Hospital and Health Service: Southern Sector (TCHHS Southern Sector) there were no on-site pharmacists at the 10 primary health care clinics, resulting in extremely limited access to clinical pharmacy outpatient services for primary care patients. A new service model was therefore required to address the challenge of providing HMRs in TCHHS (Southern Sector) to reduce the incidence of medication misadventure.

This project aimed to provide a telepharmacy service to support individualised and culturally appropriate medicine education/counselling to eligible outpatients with complex or extensive medication regimes or recently discharged from hospital. A second aim involved comparing and contrasting the feasibility, sustainability and efficacy of the face-to-face HMR to telepharmacy reviews for remote clients across TCHHS (Southern Sector)

Telepharmacy services were conducted from Weipa as the lead site to nominated spoke sites including primary health centres at Kowanyama, Pormpuraaw, Aurukun, Lockhart River, Wujal Wujal and Hope Vale.

Activities and deliverables

This initiative provided clinical support to prescribers and patients within primary health care outpatient settings in TCHHS: Southern Sector using the Healthcare Purchasing Framework 2014-15 to incentivise uptake of telepharmacy activity.

Outputs and impacts

The efficacy of the medication review methods was similar between HMRs and telepharmacy. The reported level of patient satisfaction for telepharmacy was high and technology was not seen as a barrier to service delivery. Cost analysis clearly showed that telepharmacy provides a financially viable avenue to enable outpatient pharmacy services to be delivered to remote communities.

Supporting resources

Toolkit: TCHHS Telepharmacy service model

Contact

Fiona Hall, Allied Health Professional Leader
Torres and Cape Hospital and Health Service
E: fiona.hall@health.qld.gov.au