



7 Partnership working

Community pharmacy

Extended pharmacy services in Devon

With the support of the GP Access Fund, NEW Devon and South Devon and Torbay CCGs have implemented a Pharmacy First service. This includes specific services for Winter Ailments, Minor Ailments and Emergency Repeat Medication Supply Service.

The idea

The Winter Ailment scheme promotes selfcare through a consultation with a member of the pharmacy team at a community pharmacy. The service has been advertised locally including at GP surgeries. Treatment and symptomatic relief is provided using a set list of medications for self-limiting conditions. The service provides an alternative location for patients to seek advice and treatment rather than a GP appointment, out of hours (OOH) services, walk in centre or A&E.

The Minor Ailment scheme also gives access to self-care advice for the treatment of specific ailments: bacterial conjunctivitis, impetigo, nappy rash, uncomplicated urinary tract infections and oral candidiasis. Using Patient Group Directions (PGDs) developed by GPs and pharmacists, pharmacists are able to provide patients with a prescription-only medicine without the patient needing to visit a GP practice.

The Emergency Repeat Medication Supply Service ensures local patients and visitors to the area can access an urgent supply of their regular prescription medicines. Local residents access the service through OOH only; visitors may access the service at any time. Patients access the service at the pharmacy through their pharmacist rather than requiring a prescription from a GP.

Prior to PMCF, NEW Devon CCG (Western) had already been using pharmacies as a way to relieve pressures on GP primary care services. This initial work was successful and PMCF was identified as a good opportunity to take the initiative forward on a bigger scale.

In Devon, there are 240 community pharmacies across the county. Residents, regardless of where they live, are able to access a pharmacy. The pilot views pharmacies as a really important rural access point.

The pilot also believes that utilising pharmacists is a good use of professional skills, especially in light of the nationwide GP and nurse recruitment challenges.

Impact

Over the first five months of operation, 134 pharmacies have made 6,205 interventions. The pilot estimates the service has saved 2,903 GP appointments, 1,087 OOH and 151 A&E appointments, delivering a potential overall saving of £164,101 (£92,689 from GP appointments, OOH and WICs £59,785 and £11,627 A&E appointments).

A typical comment from a local GP is: "Absolutely invaluable service to our patients and us! Very useful also for temporary residents. Using the expertise of the pharmacists appropriately."

One of the pharmacists themselves added: "Collaborating in this way has helped us to build strong relationships with GP practices; we work together to mutually help each other. PMCF has been really helpful in changing the nature of the relationships between pharmacy and GPs in practices."

Implementation tips

Ensure pharmacists, GPs and OOH providers are engaged and talking to each other as soon as possible to generate buy in and support. Establish which services are already running and operating successfully and utilise models for which there is evidence of success, expanding and adapting them, where necessary, to suit local circumstances.

Engagement with GPs and OOH services is vitally important. Ideally pharmacists and project managers need to visit practices in person. Engaging appropriately with GPs builds momentum for the service project.

Link(s)

www.england.nhs.uk/ourwork/futurenhs/pm-ext-access/resources/