



1 Active signposting

Reception care navigation

The 'frontline team', AT Medics practices, London

The concept of Frontline GP is to put GPs earlier into the patient pathway in order to troubleshoot queries, manage clinical issues where continuity of care is not required, and ensure that high standards are maintained.

The idea

Frontline GP's have a variety of roles. Telephone triage and Consultation is a Frontline GP initiative as it manages a range of patient issues quickly and allows earlier access to a GP to rapidly assess and resolve clinical issues, test results and so on. In large surgeries the Frontline GP sits at the front of reception at peak times, to ensure that issues are trouble-shooted.

The Front of House GP enables practice staff to instantly query things they are not sure about, promotes multidisciplinary working, ensures an over view of reception activities and that standards are being maintained and allows patients presenting with issues which can be rapidly resolved without needing further appointments, and enables rapid triaging for patients who are walking in. They also manage email queries.

Another part of the Frontline offer is our telephone triage and consultation service. This allows patients to receive same day access to a GP, who is supported during this time with a buddy. (see case study). There are many benefits of this system, resolving issues rapidly for patients, reducing estates requirements, and using GP time very effectively- a telephone consultation with a buddy takes half the time that it would take to see a patient. This provides more value for the patient, and frees up the GPs time to do the things only they can do.

It is expected that a percentage of patients will still require face to face appointments after telephone review- Frontline doctors are able to book them into protected same day slots to ensure no further delay.

Impact

Using virtual hubs has released valuable clinical consultation room space in a number of the practices where space was constrained and there was no room for expansion. National issues with GP shortages are well known, and by partnering GP's with administrators, and moving from face to face to telephone consultations when appropriate, GP resource is maximised.

Telephone clinics do not need to be run on site, and this means that GP's in telephone clinics can cover several surgeries.

It has also made it easier to introduce a more multidisciplinary way of working for GPs, locating them alongside clerical buddies, healthcare assistants, care navigators and others.

Implementation tips

Careful consideration is needed for planning of the operational and clinical management of patients by telephone. Staff consulting in a virtual hub require access to the patients record. The member of staff must be able to access the appropriate clinical system with the minimum of work. So-called interoperability gateways or modules in clinical systems are often used, although these are still being developed.

Care is needed to ensure these meet your requirements, particularly with respect to writing into the record, as many do not provide this functionality. Alternatively, the clinician may be provided with a login for each practice (supported by a contract where appropriate), although this adds time to the consultation, and limits the number of practices which can be covered. The most seamless approach is where practices merge, making them sites on a single clinical system.

Link(s)

