

Case Study: Savings through Medicines Optimisation

NECS have clearly demonstrated that Medicines Optimisation can deliver major savings and significant patient benefits.



The challenge

The NHS must make £20 billion in efficiency savings by 2014/15 to invest in meeting demand and improving quality for the future. In order to do this the Department of Health has developed a programme to support NHS organisations to deliver these savings focussing on Quality, Innovation, Productivity and Prevention, or QIPP.

This programme is crucial to every service improvement project. Medicines Optimisation has been identified as one of the ten priorities for commissioners of services. This is due to prescribing costs rising at a rate of around 7% per year and that around one third to one half of all medications prescribed for long term conditions are not taken as recommended. Local JSNA documents have also identified the need for improvements in cardiovascular and respiratory treatments to improve life expectancies in many regions including the South Tees area.

The task

The NECS Medicines Optimisation Team was tasked to produce a plan that would deliver the £1.2 million efficiency savings for South Tees CCG.

However, the plan was also required to deliver significant patient benefits through the use of cost and clinically effective medicines.

The execution

The prescribing data produced by members of the NECS Medicines Optimisation Team was subjected to detailed analysis using the NHS Business Services Authority prescribing analysis toolkit. This provided vital financial information on the therapeutic areas where there was significant potential for savings to be made, by comparing local data to the national average.

From this, the NECS Team identified 6 key areas as having the ability to produce the required cost savings. The 6 areas were chosen by assessing the financial impact they could create, ease of execution including consideration of the clinical evidence base and the potential resistance from clinicians and impact on patients. Medication reviews were also a key part in the implementation of the plan.

The Medicines Optimisation Team sought agreement to the plan from a number of key stakeholders. This was done by using a stakeholder map. To secure clinical engagement the plan also was put before the Tees Medicines Management Committee, as well as communicated through the organisation by the CCG to help drive the need for change. Local LINKS groups were also used to inform people of the initiative and get feedback.

The results

In total the improvement plan implemented by the NECS Medicines Optimisation Team delivered £1.36m in cost savings, and led to a £793,886 underspend on the CCG's prescribing budget.

The use of cost effective formulations of Venlafaxine for the management of depression led to efficiency savings of £245,848 bringing CCG prescribing in line with national prescribing levels.

An initiative to establish medication reviews in local care homes logged 884 interventions reducing possible hospital admissions and realising an average annual saving of £165 per patient.

This approach led to NHS Tees winning an HSJ award for Efficiency in Medicines Management 2012



For further details of how our Medicines Optimisation Team can help you, please contact:
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