Medication Management: A Bridge of Patient Support from Hospital to Home

The challenge:
In 2011, Central Community Care Access Centre (CCAC) developed an in-home Medication Management Support Services program to increase adherence to medications and reduce medication-related problems leading to unnecessary hospital readmissions.

Goal:
To create a standardized and coordinated medication management support service to improve patient safety and promote higher-quality health care when transitioning from hospital to home.

Program objectives:
- Engage patients in their care
- Support safety and independence among patients
- Improve pain management
- Reduce falls
- Link primary care, nurses and pharmacists to support integration and service continuity
- Improve communication and information sharing within the circle of care

What they did:
In 2009, the government of Ontario amended its Home Care and Community Services Act to include pharmacy services in the home for those unable to access these services elsewhere, at risk of medical complications, and taking three or more prescription medications. This legislation facilitated the development of an in-home medication management support service.

A steering committee established the need to devise a unique electronic tool that could facilitate communications among the Central CCAC, pharmacists, nurses, and primary care physicians. From 2012-13, Central CCAC provided Medication Management Support Services to 1,679 patients. Patients eligible to receive these services included those:

- taking at least three prescription medications
- with one or more chronic diseases
- identified with one or more risk factors, such as: being at risk of falls, frequent emergency department visits or hospitalizations, and uncontrolled pain
Change ideas used to reach goal:
• Lean Six Sigma quality improvement methodology informed the development of this initiative
• A web-based platform enabling nurses and pharmacists to enter data securely in the comfort of a patient’s home and create a patient-specific medication plan
• Using RAI-Home Care data to capture eligible patients at increased risk of hospital readmission triggering a referral for a rapid response nurse or pharmacist
• Follow-up visit within 60 days to assess the effectiveness of the medication management plan and to make adjustments, as appropriate
• A value-stream mapping analysis identified opportunities to have nurses specifically trained in medication management provide services, instead of generalist nurses or hospital pharmacists

Results and outcomes
Using RAI-Home Care data and patient and caregiver surveys, Central CCAC tracked a variety of measures of patient safety and patient engagement in 2012-13, from 569 program users. Outcomes included:
• Resolution of 88% of medication discrepancies and problems
• Emergency department visits decreased by 67%
• Falls decreased by 62%
• Reported pain levels decreased by 55%
• Ability to self-manage rated as good or excellent by 97% of patients
• The Medication Management Support Services was rated as good or excellent by 99% of patients
• The Ontario Drug Benefit plan realized $55 per patient in savings, amounting to about $325,000 of savings

Facilitators and challenges:
Partnering with the Institute for Safe Medication Practices Canada and the Canadian Patient Safety Institute and leveraging their expertise, were important facilitators. One challenge was to determine the most appropriate health professionals to provide the medications management services, based on their scope of practice, training required, and cost-efficiency.

Future focus:
The Central CCAC is expanding this program to patients who are within three months of being placed in a long-term care facility. A one-time Medication Reconciliation Assessment is conducted in advance of their placement. The patient’s medication schedule is then updated and provided to the long-term care facility. In addition, Central CCAC is working with other CCACs to spread this program.

Awards and recognition:
• Public Sector Leadership Bronze Award in 2014
• Canadian Innovative Best Practice Award from the National Research Corporation in 2013
• Designated a Leading Practice by Accreditation Canadian in 2013
• Recognized in Canada Health Infoway’s ImagineNation Outcomes Challenge in 2012

TO LEARN MORE, PLEASE CONTACT:
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