



Primary Care Home Case Study



Organisation:	Beacon Medical Group
Number of PCHs:	1
Population:	33,000
GP practices:	1
Partnership:	One GP practice, acute, community and mental health trusts, the clinical commissioning group, Plymouth City Council, local pharmaceutical committee and voluntary sector.
STP footprint:	Devon

The challenge

The group's 24 GPs were frustrated with the fragmentation of local services and increasingly distant relationships with other health and care providers. There was high demand for appointments which didn't need GP expertise, staff were overworked and there were unmet needs in the local community.

What they did

The group expanded its urgent care team which consists of GPs, a paramedic, nurse practitioners and pharmacists. They screen all patients seeking on-the-day appointments on the phone and invite in those who need to be seen. There is an enhanced service for the six largest care homes in their area. A pharmacist and GP carry out weekly "ward rounds", visiting patients most at risk of hospital admission. The PCH holds monthly multidisciplinary team meetings to discuss patients of particular concern and create treatment plans. A psychiatrist is based in surgeries two days a week to see patients with mental health needs and offer advice to GPs. There are many armed forces veterans in the area who are vulnerable to mental health and other medical problems. By running an awareness campaign, the PCH now knows of around 90 veterans locally, compared with 27 previously, and is offering them greater support. The group also works with community pharmacists on marketing campaigns around flu jabs. The practice provides in-house services for dermatology patients and those with musculoskeletal problems.

The impact

The urgent care teams have enabled the group to cut the average waiting time for GP appointments by six days. There's been a substantial reduction both in GP referrals to hospital and length of stay for care home residents admitted to hospital. For patients over 60, the growth rate in admissions fell from 10% to zero. There's been a 13% rise in flu jabs for patients with chronic obstructive pulmonary disease, £39,000 savings from 284 medication reviews and a rise in staff satisfaction, with 87% enjoying their job in 2016 compared with 61% in 2015.

Lessons learnt/success factors

Lessons learnt include a willingness to take risks and take on new initiatives without waiting for full funding to drive visible change. Continuing funding will be the key to the future success of the primary care home.

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