Using telehealth to improve the quality of dietetic care for care home residents

Catherine McShane, Clinical Project Manager catherinemcshane@nhs.net www.nhshealthcall.co.uk

Background:
The aim of Health Call Undernutrition is to use telehealth to remotely monitor patients under the care of the dietitian, supporting self management and enabling the provision of proactive, timely dietetic intervention.

Context

The Problem

- Undernutrition is a major problem in the UK.
- Estimated undernutrition costs over £19 billion per year.¹
- Treatment shown to reduce complications by 40% and mortality by 70%.²
- Often treated with oral nutritional supplements (ONS) but without monitoring of compliance or clinical effectiveness.

The Solution

- To develop, implement and evaluate a telehealth solution to support the provision of dietetic services to care home patients.
- Jointly developed with InHealthcare.
- Patients, carers and clinicians involved throughout.
- Originally piloted within care homes in County Durham and Darlington (Feb 2013 – Jan 2014).
- Rolled out to a further 14 care homes in Northern Ireland by Southern Health and Social Care Trust.

Results

- 180 appointments saved
- £20k saved in ONS prescribing.
- 10% ONS stopped or reduced earlier.
- Improved shared care with care homes.
- Patients and carers report feeling better cared for.
- Length of time under dietetic care reduced from 6-9 months to 4 months.
- 2 hours per patient saved in consultation.
- 58% patients ONS reduced.
- 22% increased sooner as a result of improved monitoring.³

Benefits

✓ Improved safety
✓ Improved quality
✓ Improved efficiency
✓ Improved cost effectiveness
✓ Increased capacity
✓ Improved co-ordinated care

Care home feedback

“It makes us more aware of the residents nutrition”
“It only takes 2 minutes – it’s invaluable”
“Staff know that if there are any problems a dietitian will call” - Care Home Manager, County Durham and Darlington Foundation Trust (CDDFT)

Clinician feedback

“The automated system offers great support to the dietitians and empowers the care home staff to take a more proactive approach to monitoring their increasing number of vulnerable residents. The residents and their families feel more supported too because the frequency of monitoring has been increased along with more timely reviews. To stop the service would be a backward step. We couldn’t go back to what we did before.” Mandy Gilmore, The Head of Dietetics at Southern Health and Social Care Trust

“Of the 108 patients registered from Feb 2015 to Sept 2015, a 22% increase in ONS prescribed has been reported by care homes as a result of the Health Call Undernutrition service.” Catherine McShane, Lead Dietitian at County Durham and Darlington NHS Foundation Trust (CDDFT)

References