Arden&GEM

NHS

Arden and Greater East Midlands
Commissioning Support Unit

Case Study: Business Intelligence

Opportunity spotting for Clinical Commissioning Groups

Identifying efficiencies and opportunities for quality improvements requires a detailed analysis of costs, benchmarking and a significant understanding of the utilisation of services.

NHS Arden & GEM Commissioning Support Unit (CSU) (working in association with NHS Central Midlands CSU) undertook extensive data analysis in order to provide six Clinical Commissioning Groups (CCGs) with the information and analysis required to identify potential QIPP opportunities for 2014/15.

The analysis focused on acute hospital activity amenable to QIPP interventions, benchmarking CCG activity levels against other commissioners. This provided CCGs with an accurate evaluation of opportunities that had the potential to deliver tangible improvements.

The challenge

With a target of £20 billion of efficiency savings by 2015, the NHS has to find ways to make the best possible use of available funds. The major challenge is finding savings while continuing to improve patient care. Delivering such efficiencies requires commissioners to think creatively about where improvements could be made and to make decisions that are underpinned by robust evidence.

We are working with CCGs in Warwickshire, Coventry and Worcestershire to help them meet this challenge by taking a proactive approach to opportunity spotting. We provide the tools to make effective decisions that will have a tangible impact on reducing costs and improving outcomes.

Our approach

Our Business Intelligence and Service Redesign teams carried out in depth analysis for each CCG area in order to develop information packs to support them with opportunity scanning.

To ensure information was proportionate and targeted, the packs focused on utilisation rates for hospital activities amenable to commissioner based QIPP schemes. For example, falls related admissions for inpatients, consultant to consultant referrals for outpatients and attendances of patients who live in close proximity to an Accident and Emergency unit.

Each pack provided a summary of activity and spend, comparison of utilisation rates across all CCGs in the West Midlands, trends in utilisation rates over several years and a comparison of the rate of change in utilisation rates across all CCGs in the West Midlands.

Find out more…

about how we can help you improve quality and efficiency, contact NHS Arden & GEM Commissioning Support Unit:

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Recognising the differences between CCGs when comparing utilisation rates, we presented information in 'Funnel Plot' graphs to help understand the true significance of variations. This enabled CCGs to hone in on particular areas of interest that warranted further investigation.

Outcomes

The information packs helped CCGs to gain a full understanding of current performance in key areas and highlighted opportunities for QIPP schemes, including:

- providing better support for people to manage their own medicines
- improving community mental health services
- raising awareness of the harms of smoking and alcohol and the importance of a healthy lifestyle
- improving end of life care to allow people to die at home if they wish to
- further investigation of GP and consultant to consultant referrals
- looking at cases where people are more inclined to attend Accident and Emergency due to habit or close proximity

Our in depth analysis ensured that CCGs were able to make informed decisions about where to target future resources. A proactive approach to opportunity spotting relieved CCGs of complex and time consuming data analysis, allowing them to focus on taking action to improve services.

Following the initial analysis, all six CCGs requested further exploration of particular areas of interest to support decision making around the implementation of particular service change or commissioning policy.

This included further breakdowns of procedures of limited clinical value (i.e. certain elective inpatient procedures) and more in depth analysis of self-harm, vaccine preventable and mental health related admissions.

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