Meeting the demand for virtual ward services

How remote monitoring helped Medway to maximise virtual ward capacity and minimise hospital readmissions.
Key results

26%
Reduction in hospital readmissions

37%
Reduction in in-person home visits

85%
Patients extremely likely to recommend
Increased demand for virtual ward services to maximise capacity for patients requiring acute hospital care

Surge in hospitalisations due to COVID-19 and winter related conditions presented an increased need for Medway’s virtual ward service to prevent hospital capacity from becoming overwhelmed.

Compounded pressure on hospital resource due to readmission of patients suffering from chronic conditions

As is common across England, lack of tools to detect health deterioration within patients suffering from long-term conditions can occur too late leading to rehospitalisations.

Increased risk of virus transmission when delivering care within the home

Medway needed to minimise in-person visits to reduce risk of COVID-19 exposure and transmission while still delivering high quality and effective care to patients within their home.

Challenges

Medway’s Surgical Medical Acute Response Team (SMART) are a dedicated team of nurses, consultants and therapists who lead the trust’s virtual ward programme.

This programme allows acute patients normally hospitalised to be discharged and receive care within their own home as a continuation of the hospital’s acute admission pathway.

The multidisciplinary team’s goals are to increase flow and efficiency of discharge across multiple clinical departments including pre- and postoperative, frailty, cardiovascular and respiratory.

Medway NHS Foundation Trust’s SMART Service

“It was good to be at home but still given the care as if I was in hospital.”

Patient Feedback, Patient Admitted to Medway’s SMART Service

Solution

Medway’s SMART service used Current Health’s solution to increase virtual ward capacity and minimise hospital readmissions. The technology was initially integrated into a virtual care pathway for Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disorder (COPD) and asthma patients.

Continuous vital sign monitoring at home
Following treatment for an acute exacerbation of COPD or asthma, patients were discharged home with Current Health’s monitoring kit.

The sensor included within the kit was worn comfortably on the patient’s upper arm where it continuously measured their vital signs during the day, and at night if required.

The supplied tablet device, provided reminders to the patient to submit blood pressure readings using an integrated blood pressure cuff.

Clinical dashboard for remote analysis
Back at the hospital, SMART could visualise both real-time and trend health data for their COPD and asthma patients on a single centralised dashboard.

Built-in and disease specific alarm notifications alerted the team to the early signs of health deterioration. This prompted the team to analyse vital sign trends and movement data to establish whether deterioration was due to a clinical issue or as a result of daily active living.

Further assessment of health via video call
To understand symptoms and determine the reasons for health deterioration, the team engaged with their patients using built-in video calling.

Through visual assessment and access to vitals data, the team were able to deliver the appropriate intervention to prevent an acute episode requiring hospitalisation.

Medway’s SMART service used Current Health’s solution to increase virtual ward capacity and minimise hospital readmissions. The technology was initially integrated into a virtual care pathway for Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disorder (COPD) and asthma patients.
Results

“Everyone has been so helpful, and the service is excellent. Very reassuring being monitored. Such a caring team. Brilliant tool.”

Patient Feedback, Patient Admitted to Medway’s SMART Service

“Efficient service, allowed me to go home earlier with the reassurance that I was still being monitored.”

Patient Feedback, Patient Admitted to Medway’s SMART Service

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Automatic detection of health deterioration, permitted the earlier delivery of intervention in patients’ homes, preventing unnecessary readmissions.

Due to automated vitals capture and video call capabilities, home visits could be minimised, reducing risk of virus exposure and transmission.

Time savings also allowed the team to increase virtual ward capacity using the same clinical resource.

Patients reported how reassured and comforted they felt by continuous monitoring and liked the convenience of video calls with their care team.
Looking forward

Continuous, clinical grade monitoring tools have proven to enhance virtual ward services by providing a data rich insight into patient health at home. With this, teams can identify deterioration sooner, allowing for the delivery of proactive care which can help reduce rates of readmission.

Video visits have also afforded greater service efficiency. This has enabled cohort size to be increased without reducing the high standard of care delivered which is reflected by exceptional patient satisfaction scores.

Based on this success, Medway’s SMART service has started to integrate remote monitoring into pre-operative, post-operative and frailty care pathways.

“Automated and continuous vital sign capture and video calling has helped us to reduce the number and frequency of home visits without compromising the quality of care we provide. As we refine and grow this technology enabled programme, we aim to replace 50% of in-person interactions with virtual visits. This will enable us to extend our service to other clinical areas and manage more patients safely at home.”

Jackie Hammond
Medway’s SMART Service Manager
About Current Health

Current Health enables healthcare organisations to deliver end-to-end services in the home, expanding access to high-quality, patient-centric care at a lower cost.

Our enterprise care-at-home platform can be tailored to the needs of the individual patient, supporting the full range of clinical use cases and patient acuity levels. We provide an interoperable platform that combines state of the art technology – including continuous and non-continuous monitoring, telehealth and patient engagement tools – to provide a clear window into the patient’s home and enable care teams to intervene with the right patient at the right time.

For more information, visit currenthealth.com.
For more information please visit our website: currenthealth.com