



Home Medicines Review Case Study: Goulburn Valley Community Health Service

Goulburn Valley Community Health Service's (GVCHS) commitment to the provision of quality bulk-billed services has led to a partnership approach between its medical clinic and a local pharmacy to deliver home-based medication management review services for clients.

Support from the local division of general practice

The first Home Medicines Review (HMR) service was initiated after a visit to the medical clinic's GP from the Goulburn Valley Division of General Practice's pharmacist project officer. The division staffer provided a briefing on the HMR process and informed the GP that a local accredited pharmacist was willing to visit clients in their own homes.

Identification of clients that would benefit

The GP offers an HMR service to clients who may benefit from an HMR – typically these include those having trouble managing their medicines, those on more than 5 medications, those on warfarin, and those expressing difficulties in understanding what their medicines are for and how to take them.

"Normally the pharmacist would advise on what kind of medications the patient is on, and provide opinions to the patient and to me... she explains the side effects [to the client] and what the medicines are for" says the GP, Dr Satpal Singh. "We often find that patients need to have blister packs organised by the pharmacy, especially the elderly because they can get easily confused about when to take their medications, or whether or not they already taken them".

Dr Singh has now organised more than 20 HMR services for clients of the clinic.

Enablers

- The visit by the local division of general practice was the key to helping the GP understand the HMR process, and to let him know that referrals to the local pharmacies would be acted upon promptly.
- The responsiveness of the local accredited pharmacist and the quality of her reports back to the GP was seen as a positive.
- The key motivation for delivery of HMR was that it is seen as a quality service for clients in the community, fitting in with the philosophy of community health.
- The remuneration of \$137.05 (bulk billed) covered the costs of the two GP consultations and the referral processes required to complete the service.
- Community pharmacies are also remunerated, receiving \$183.60 for facilitating a home visit by an accredited pharmacist.

Challenges

- Provision of an HMR service is relatively time consuming, involving a GP consultation, referral, home visit, pharmacist report, and second GP consultation.
- Shortages of GPs and pharmacists in Shepparton means that only the most needy clients are able to receive an HMR service.
- The dissemination of common resources and sharing of administrative support at a regional or state level (for example, common IT templates and rotating staff between community health services) were suggested as initiatives that could increase HMR uptake.

With thanks to Dr Satpal Singh.