Conference Abstract

Making technology-enabled change work

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Abstract

Delivering new models of integrated care is a major change for many health "ecosystems" involving funders, providers and patients. Technology plays a crucial enabling role but is only one element to be considered in the change management process.

Experience from implementations across several international markets indicates that programmes that are explicit and holistic in their approach to this complex change requirement fare better than those that do not. Technology enables the new approach but is not its focus. In this session, we will talk about an emerging approach to making a technology-enabled change to integrated care work.

The terms "integrated care", "connected care" or "joined up care" refer to a framework for new models of care to improve patient outcomes and optimise scarce resources in the health and social care system. This framework and the principles that underpin it are increasingly recognised as the future model for healthcare sustainability internationally. While each country has a local approach tailored to their unique populations, change management lessons from their implementations are transferable.

This presentation will share the experiences from care providers in Australia, Singapore and several health regions in New Zealand, a country described by The Commonwealth Fund as "the world's most integrated healthcare system".

In each of the cases discussed, technology has enabled a change to new models of care and targeted health programmes for elderly and LTC populations, supporting acute demand management, early discharge, management of complex care in the community. Each of these models has achieved positive results including as a 34% reduction in bed days used by enrolled patients; 36% reduction in ED presentations from enrolled patients; 13% improvement in Residential Aged Care bed utilization; 42% reduction in heal times and 25% reduction in consumable costs.

Technology plays an enabling role by, for example, allowing siloed care teams to communicate more easily with a shared care plan, empowering patients and their families in their own care and sharing information.

Obviously all integrated care initiatives need to consider change management best practices such as setting clear goals with stakeholder support, well-aligned Key Performance Indicators and metrics, and adopting IT platforms that enable change without counter-productive disruption.

There are also change management considerations unique to an integrated care implementation. These include involving clinical leadership, designing an appropriate and effective model of care that directly supports the target population's unique needs, aligning funding models to incentivise the correct behaviours, and ensuring providers have the right roles and responsibilities to deliver.

Integrated care programmes that have adopted these principles have delivered improved patient outcomes and provider efficiencies, in contrast to projects and pilots that have not led to sustainable change.

Keywords