Increasing Access Options For Sydney District Nursing Patients

Jo Leavy, Quality & Clinical Risk Manager, SLHD Community Health Services

**Background**

Sydney District Nursing (SDN) have provided nursing care to patients in their homes for over 100 years. In addition to in-home nursing services, SDN have three fixed site nursing clinics that provide an alternative care setting. These are based in community health centres in Croydon, Marrickville and Redfern. Currently not all patients are provided with the option to attend the clinics. Allocation of patients for in-home care or clinic attendance at the point of intake is inconsistent.

In 2014, 98 SDN Patient Experience interviews were conducted and 200 Patient Satisfaction surveys collected. A number of the patient respondents had attended the nursing clinics at Marrickville and Croydon Health Centres. Some concerns were raised by respondents regarding waiting times for nurses attending the home and the lack of consistency of nursing staff. The option for patients to be seen at a nursing clinic ensures patients have a set appointment time and are provided with more consistent nursing staff.

Additionally, in recent years there has been an increase in the reporting of verbal aggression towards SDN staff delivering in-home care, particularly in the Redfern/Waterloo area. Any verbal or physical threats of aggression are reported in the Incident Information Management System (IIMS). The ability to provide care for patients in nursing clinics allows for a safer and more secure environment in which to see high-risk patients thus reducing Work Health and Safety risks to staff working offsite. The use of new or agency staff to run the clinics also allows for closer supervision and mentoring of less experienced staff.

**Aim**

To increase access options for Sydney District Nursing patients:
- Within 1 year all suitable SDN patients will be offered a choice of appointment locations (home or clinic)
- Within 12 months the SDN clinics will be fully utilised
- Within 12 months central intake (ACT) will provide choice of setting to patients at point of intake

**Problems Identified**

- Increased demand for community nursing services due to early discharge from hospital and increased number of Hospital in The Home patients
- Appointment location options for clients not always identified at point of intake
- Waiting lists due to increased demand on services and staffing availability

**Results**

**Clinic R**
- Reinstituted clinics. Previously Clinic R closed during 2016

**Clinic M:**
- Overall increase in clinic utilisation
- Development of inclusion/exclusion criteria
- Increased awareness of identifying suitable patients for clinic setting
- Identification of additional clinic sites including doubling current clinics at site R and C
- Meetings held with HealthOne Green Square planning team regarding option to provide nursing clinics as part of model of care
- Planning meeting held regarding location of new clinic in Canterbury LGA
- Support from the District to introduce additional primary health care clinics, including at Sydney Dental Hospital (Central Station). Two meetings held to discuss

**Changes made**

- Re establishment of Clinic R
- Changes made to the intake form to identify suitable patients to be seen in clinics
- Weekly monitoring of clinic utilisation
- Weekly reporting of clinic availability to intake service, Nurse Managers and NUMs
- Development of inclusion and exclusion criteria
- Identification of future clinic sites
- Discussions held re future additional clinic locations including new site at Canterbury and Green Square
- Consideration of increasing access to clinics on weekends

**Results (cont)**

**Diagnosis of the Problem**

**Barriers**
- Staff turnover
- Insufficient staff to conduct the clinics
- Culture shift from providing services to patients in the home to an alternate environment

**Plans to sustain change**
- Continue to monitor clinic utilisation
- Ongoing meetings with management and intake service to ensure continued identification of suitable patients to clinics

**Current Plans**
- Plan to subdivide current clinic C & R into 2 clinics to increase capacity
- Plan to implement weekend clinics to improve access to patients
- Plan to open clinic at Green Square and in Canterbury LGA (high priority)
- Future meeting with intake service managers to propose patients provided appointments at point of intake
- Plan to increase opening times of clinics to 6-7pm

**Link to National Standards**

National Standard 1 Governance for Safety and Quality

1.6.2 Actions are taken to maximise patient safety and quality

1.10.5 Supervision of the clinical workforce is provided where necessary

1.18.1 Patients and carers are partners in planning for their treatment for individuals to fulfill their designated role

**Team members**

Cassandra Dearing Nurse Manager SDN
Lin LI A/NUM
Josh Pike A/NUM

**Contact Details**

Jo.leavy@sswhs.nsw.gov.au
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