



Delivering value based healthcare

Measuring outcomes that matter to patients:

Integrated practice units to improve value in chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD).



The challenge

COPD is the 4th leading cause of death world-wide and remains a large problem in our local populations.

- Globally COPD is responsible for an increasing proportion of deaths, and patients with the condition can experience potentially serious but unpredictable disease exacerbations
- People with very severe COPD have a burden of disabling physical symptoms (especially breathlessness), compounded by comorbidity and psychological distress.

Our intervention

Working with the Lambeth and Southwark Integrated Respiratory Team (IRT) to deliver better value care to patients with COPD.

- IRT is a seven days-a-week multidisciplinary team led by two local GP respiratory leads and two integrated respiratory consultants
- Central to the service are Respiratory Virtual Clinics – consultant led clinical sessions supported by a respiratory pharmacist
- Primary care case notes and clinical data for COPD patients are reviewed with the practice staff
- A particular focus of the IRT has been optimising drug therapy by reducing the use of high dose inhaled steroids, inline with best practice guidelines
- In parallel, the team worked to increase referrals of COPD patients to pulmonary rehabilitation, a high-value intervention that is known to improve breathlessness, exercise capacity, and reduce re-admissions.

Our impact

Savings were made, 50% increase in pulmonary rehabilitation referrals, 34% reduction in COPD admissions, 17% reduction in length of stay.

- £350,000 cumulative savings over seven quarters made in the borough of Lambeth alone
- 50% increase in referrals from primary care for pulmonary rehabilitation, and the Southwark and Lambeth programmes received the most referrals per year of any programme nationally
- 34% reduction in acute COPD admissions to Kings College Hospital NHS Foundation Trust following the inception of IRT in 2012
- 17% reduction in length of stay from 4.45 to 3.7 days
- Highest national COPD audit score in London