

## CASE STUDY: Medicines Information Resources – Ballarat Health Services Library & Pharmacy collaboration

Refers to: NSQHS Standard 4 Medication Safety

Keywords: Drug Information Services, Medication Errors, Library Collection Development

### **Introduction**

Ballarat Health Service is the largest regional hospital in the Grampians region located in Victoria, Australia. It provides a comprehensive range of hospital, mental health, and primary care services and has 22 sites within the region. In this initiative, BHS Library worked with the BHS Pharmacy Department on a number of programs to increase the use of medication resources within BHS.

### **Background**

This project was initiated when new accreditation guidelines were released in 2012. The NSQHS Standards, in particular Standard 4: Medication Safety was of particular relevance. Section 4.9 states hospitals need to “ensure that current and accurate medicines information and decision support tools are readily available to the clinical workforce when making clinical decisions related to medicines use.” The library felt they had a key role to play here and approached Pharmacy for guidance on a definitive list of medication resources that wards could keep. The idea was to go around and “remove everything else”. From this idea the relationship and collaboration with Pharmacy grew.

The BHS library oversaw subscriptions to locally-purchased medication resources and ensured that access to state-funded web resources such as those found on the Clinicians Health Channel (eg. MIMS, Australian Medicines Handbook, Therapeutic Guidelines) worked seamlessly across the organisation. As custodians of these information resources, it was the library’s responsibility to ensure staff knew what medication resources existed and how to access them. The BHS library was also responsible for purchasing hardcopy medication resources and distributing these throughout the organisation.

### **Method**

A range of initiatives was implemented.

#### Drug book audit

BHS library staff visited all 22 BHS sites to undertake a medication resources audit (drug book audit). Basically this appraisal was conducted over a 12-month period in 2014 using criteria from the Director of Pharmacy to decide which resources should be kept. Having authority from Pharmacy allowed us to remove books without questions as a directive had been issued. In total we removed 371 superseded medication resources as well as 280 outdated books (totalling 651 resources). If departments wanted to maintain hard copies the library organised these to be purchased for them. This audit now continues and it has become policy that the BHS library have authority (final say) over any other print books the organisation owns. This allows the library to remove outdated resources from areas, which improves the chance that current evidence-based information is used in clinical care.

This process also allowed library staff to view the organisation in a different light. We looked into rooms and offices we never knew existed and made physical contact with people we had only ever emailed before. It also highlighted the various roles that library staff can play when they are more embedded within departments.

#### Medication resources survey

An online Medication Decision Support Tools Survey was run in June 2014 and replicated in 2017 via SurveyMonkey. The questions focused on how often resources had been used (last 4 weeks, last 12 months), what features were used in the online resources, whether the medication resources answered the query, where a clinician would go for further advice, ease of use, and suggestions as to how BHS could further support clinicians' use of medication resources. Where possible open ended questions were used to elicit additional information which might improve the way medication resources were used at BHS.

Results indicated that clinicians used a wide range of medicines information to aid them in their clinical work across a variety of different areas. Most clinicians used additional features within products (such as calculators) and generally their query was answered. Several people mentioned using Google if they couldn't find an answer. There were many comments about educating staff and promoting resources more widely as people may not be aware they existed or how to access them.

Overwhelmingly the results highlighted the need for a direct link to medicines information on either desktops or the intranet homepage. Comments such as "Have desktop icons as finding them on the intranet can be difficult and time consuming" were a recurrent theme. The 2014 survey also revealed difficulties in accessing medicine decision support tools; though changes were made the

2017 survey highlighted that more needed to be done. Several recommendations emerged from the survey including educating clinicians on the pitfalls of using Google for medicines information; promotion of resources organisation-wide, and providing an online list of Pharmacy recommended drug calculators. These sub projects are currently being implemented.

Ideally we needed a direct link to drug resources on the intranet homepage to make access easier for clinicians. After many discussions with relevant stakeholders and using evidence from our survey, a direct link was added to the intranet homepage in September 2017. In just two months hits on the drug resources page have grown by over 25% and will continue to do so as more people become aware of its existence.

### Other initiatives

The project also utilised another of the NSQHS Standard 4.9 strategies to promote the use of information sources and decision support tools using communication strategies such as newsletters, presentations, in-service education sessions and awareness campaigns. Information regarding medication resources has been published in Library, Pharmacy and organisation-wide newsletters and posters. Formal training has occurred at individual and departmental levels, and group training sessions (e.g. for nursing night staff) continue across multiple sites.

In conjunction with the Standard 4: Medication Safety Committee this initial drug book audit and innovation project has led to the development of a Decision Support Tools Protocol which will ensure that Ballarat Health Services medication resources remain current into subsequent years as we move past each accreditation. The library plays a key part in ensuring this Protocol is followed so that current and accurate medicines information and decision support tools are readily available to the clinical workforce when making clinical decisions related to medicines use.

### **Discussion**

This project has opened up new communication avenues and opportunities for the library. We now have a great collaborative relationship with Pharmacy and often bounce ideas off one another. It also opened up lines of communication when we were physically present onwards, which brings great benefit to the library. In 2014 the project won the prestigious annual BHS Corporate Quality Award highlighting the work undertaken, which has today become “business as usual”. The

initiatives were all “free” and were more about devoting time to each project to help the organisation grow and to hopefully influence patient outcomes through the use of current and accurate medicines information. A presentation on the project, jointly written by Pharmacy and Library staff, has been accepted for an overseas conference in 2018. As the years roll on we envisage more Library and Pharmacy collaborations occurring.