

Introduction of Community Care Allied Health Assistant Clinics

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Introduction

Demand for physiotherapy services is steadily increasing. The Community Care service sought to improve utilisation of qualified Allied Health Assistants (AHA) and physiotherapists by introducing AHA clinics to provide review appointments, between the physiotherapist's follow up.

Methods

A literature review was conducted to scope AHA roles in other jurisdictions.

Review of Australian Physiotherapy Association position statement on assistant scope of practice.

The physiotherapy team were educated on roles, practice scope and appropriate referrals.

Business rules, referral criteria and a service pathway were developed.

Clinics set up.

Focus groups were conducted with AHA's and physiotherapists.

Telephone surveys were conducted with patients.

Results

71 occasions of service provided in 6 months, equating to 35.5 hours which physiotherapists used for more complex patients and new assessments.

Episode of care reduced from 150.9 days to 98.6 days = 34%.

AHA's reported increased job satisfaction and structure to their roles. Physiotherapists were more confident that exercises were performed regularly, giving them more time for more complex casework.

Nil issues reported through patient feedback. Comments included: "They (the AHA) helped me understand what to do" and; "They (the AHA) reinforced what I was doing".

AHA Review clinics increased from 2 to 4 due to success of project.

Conclusion

AHA clinics benefit staff and patients, providing more frequent reviews and reduced episode of care.