

Co-located pharmacy improves patient engagement within an Aboriginal primary health care service

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A pharmacy service that is co-located within a remote hospital provides primary health care services to the Fitzroy Valley town and surrounding communities in the Kimberley under s100 Remote Area Aboriginal Health Services (RAAHS) arrangements. It is the first NHS approved pharmacy co-located within an Aboriginal primary health care service in remote Australia. The pharmacy has a professional services focus and provides outpatient dispensing, medication management, compliance programs and general outreach services, focused on the surrounding Aboriginal population.

The presenters will provide an overview of the development and implementation of the initiative and how it is meeting the needs of the community. The predominantly Aboriginal population of the Fitzroy Valley had difficulty accessing pharmacy services due to their remote location and distance to the nearest pharmacy. The burden of chronic disease is significant, with rates of chronic illness higher than the Australian average.

The pharmacy service supplies medicines under s100 (RAHHS) arrangements to all outpatients with appropriate education and follow up. In addition, clinical reviews and medication reconciliation are conducted on all chronic disease clients regularly. Dose Administration Aid services and medication education are provided in a holistic and culturally appropriate manner. The pharmacy has been successful in opening other funding sources in addition to the S100 (RAAHS) arrangements.

This presentation will highlight the accessibility of pharmacists as trusted members of the primary health care team and how the success of the initiative has extensively engaged communities and regional stakeholders. Other services involve collaboration with specialist teams such as Kimberley Renal Service and other regional providers such as the Kimberley Population Health Unit, the Nindilingarri Cultural health Service and the Royal Flying Doctors Service.

The presentation will contend that the primary aim to improve patient engagement and access to pharmacy based services as well as improving health outcomes through increased compliance and education has been achieved successfully. This has resulted in enhanced quality use of medicines.

This forms a sustainable model that may be duplicated in other regional and remote locations.