Patient Online

Case study: Increasing patient registration

London Road Medical Centre, Croydon

April 2017

London Road Medical Centre is a Croydon based GP surgery with a practice population of 5,788. It was recommended to the Healthy London Partnership Patient Online team after discussions with a local GP IT facilitator in the area. The practice felt the options to increase sign up to Patient Online had been exhausted and due to their transient, ethnically diverse population decided these services would not be offered in their area.

The team first met one-on-one with the practice to better understand some of their concerns and review the processes they had used in the past to gauge what had worked or failed. They worked with the practice to identify ways to increase the use of Patient Online and see how this could benefit the practice and their patients. An initial implementation plan was created with tailored suggestions on how to increase patients’ awareness of and registrations to Patient Online.

The practice was asked to rate each item on the plan red, amber or green. Red meant it could not be implemented in the practice, amber would involve further discussion and green could definitely be implemented. This then formed the basis of the actual implementation plan to assist the practice. The plan ensured:

- The practice ordered free national communications materials including posters, leaflets and bunting to display in the reception area and entrance and exit points.
- Healthy London Partnership trained all staff to ensure that they understood the functionality of the clinical system, which included:
  - Registering a dummy patient.
  - Completing the patient journey to register for an account to use online services.
  - Analysing the appointment book and making suggestions on extra appointment slots that could be made available online.
  - Discussing the option of switching on the online registrations functionality.
  - Training staff on the vouching process for patient registrations and approving online registrations (as identified in section 6.4.5 Details of the identity verification process of Patient Online in Primary Care Good Practice Guidance on Identity Verification NHS England guide).
  - Running performance searches to demonstrate current performance in the practice (data can be seen on the next page).
The practice had the impression that those coming to the surgery did not seem interested in the services offered online. With this in mind, an SMS campaign was developed to target those that are not frequent practice attendees. A list of patients was identified that met the criteria: over 16 years of age with a mobile number and not already registered for Patient Online. The below data demonstrates the target reach of the campaign.

- 1,597 patients were sent an SMS – 80% were successfully delivered – 10.8% clicked through to the website

To supplement the SMS campaign, practice staff was also advised to use the following actions to increase patient registrations:

- Pre-printing registration forms for patients with appointments that day.
- Email reply to all patients that requested their prescriptions by email to advise them this could now be actioned online.
- Practice competitions among staff.

Two weeks after the initial SMS campaign Healthy London Partnership’s team returned to the practice to further analyse the appointments book and further changes were agreed. These changes triggered a further SMS campaign due to their evidence that more online appointments could be made available:

- 1,597 patients were sent an SMS – 79.7% successfully delivered – 9% clicked through to the website

**London Road Medical Practice – Patient Online utilisation**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Week 1</th>
<th>Week 2</th>
<th>Week 3</th>
<th>Week 4</th>
<th>Week 5</th>
<th>Week 6</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Active patients</td>
<td>79</td>
<td>85</td>
<td>142</td>
<td>169</td>
<td>244</td>
<td>262</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Live Patients</td>
<td>293</td>
<td>300</td>
<td>349</td>
<td>367</td>
<td>392</td>
<td>433</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percentage</td>
<td>6.4%</td>
<td>6.7%</td>
<td>8.5%</td>
<td>9.3%</td>
<td>11.0%</td>
<td>12.0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Appointments available next 2 weeks</th>
<th>140</th>
<th>126</th>
<th>126</th>
<th>452</th>
<th>438</th>
<th>580</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>% appointments available</td>
<td>9.0%</td>
<td>16.2%</td>
<td>16.2%</td>
<td>31.6%</td>
<td>36.0%</td>
<td>33.8%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The main goal in this case was to assist a London practice to increase their overall online services to patients. Healthy London Partnership wanted to ensure the practice staff was knowledgeable of these online services; felt more comfortable in delivering them; understood the benefits to their practice and their patients; and were able to increase registration and appointment availability.

The support increased patient activation in just five weeks to 10.99% of patients registered to utilise these services and opened up their available appointments to 36%.

It revealed that the practice's patients were interested in using GP online services and assisted the practice in understanding how to deliver these services to their patients while understanding the benefit to the practice.

For additional information or support contact ENGLAND.POLLondon@nhs.net