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Healthy, thriving communities, Kia Momoho Te Hāpori Ōranga.

Ensuring the best use of our resources – what can each of us do to help?

The demand for our health services here in the Bay of Plenty and across the rest of New Zealand, has increased strongly over recent years, and will continue to do so into the future. The healthcare environment is changing rapidly and as the health needs of our populations shift we all continually need to find ways to make the best use of the precious resources available to us.

We should all be thinking about how we can use our resources in the most effective way to serve our communities and to ensure that nothing is wasted. One of our CARE values is All-one-team and as one team we all have a part to play, no matter how big or small, no matter what job we do.

As part of this ongoing drive to use our health dollars in the best possible way we are constantly looking at areas where we could do things differently or more efficiently.

That is why, in this newsletter, I am asking all of our DHB staff to think about the role they can play and what they can do individually to make a difference. In the course of our daily working lives we all come across examples of instances where waste could be avoided, or resources used more appropriately.

Please can each of you ask yourselves:

What can I do in my role today, tomorrow, next week and into the future that will make a difference? How can I help make the best use of resources? How can I help avoid unnecessary waste?

It's very important that we all ensure we're using our resources as prudently as possible. We have an obligation to our community to make sure that we're delivering the best services we can, without waste.

Everyone has some impact on expenditure, be that large or small, and consequently we also all have an opportunity to contribute and ensure we are not wasteful in any way.

If we can generate ideas in the short-term in our own spheres of influence, it will help us to be better placed going forward as a collective.

Thank you for your support. Our community is relying on us.

Choosing Wisely

In a similar vein to the above, we are currently exploring the Choosing Wisely approach, an initiative of the American Board of Internal Medicine (ABIM) Foundation.

Choosing Wisely aims to promote a culture where low value and inappropriate clinical interventions are avoided. It encourages patients and health professionals to have well-informed conversations around their treatment options, leading to better decisions and outcomes.

The campaign's mission is to help promote care that is:

- Supported by evidence
- Not duplicative of other tests or procedures already received
- Free from harm
- Truly necessary

The campaign has been implemented in other areas of the country and an example of its potential impact comes from Hutt Valley DHB.

Hutt Valley undertook a campaign to cut the number of urine tests being carried out on hospital patients. This not only significantly reduced the number of unnecessary tests being ordered but also lowered the level of antibiotic prescribing.

Dr Lynn McBain, from the Department of Primary Health Care and General Practice, University of Otago, Wellington, was a lead researcher on the campaign.

"The removal of urine dipsticks from wards and the education of staff significantly reduced the number of urine culture requests and is a useful strategy to reduce the overuse of antibiotics, without increasing the incidence of urinary tract infections," said Dr McBain.

"We are seeing results which are showing ways we can improve patient care and outcomes by using less testing and prescribing less antibiotics. This is a cost saving for the health system and benefits patients."

Average monthly urine test requests for inpatients fell from 432 in a year to 312 in the year to September 2017, saving the Hutt Valley District Health Board an estimated \$41,760.

It is examples like this which show what can be achieved, with no impact on the care that we deliver to our patients. We're in a new healthcare environment and it's one where it's even more important that we are choosing wisely with the decisions we make.

"Beware of little expenses. A small leak will sink a great ship."

Benjamin Franklin (1706-1790) politician, inventor, and one of the Founding Fathers of the United States.

Awesome managers

I recently received a letter from one of our addiction clinicians which I wanted to share with you. The detail contained within it spoke to me as a shining example of our Excellence CARE value in action.

The clinician said she had felt compelled to write me a letter “to acknowledge the support that I have received over the past 11 years” from two of her managers.

She said the managers had “supported me in numerous areas and have been there in tough and challenging times as well as in the great times.”

The clinician goes on to detail some of that support before saying “I just thought it would be helpful to share this with you to let you know what awesome managers look like”.

It’s great to hear of team members receiving great support from their leaders.

“There is nothing so useless as doing efficiently that which should not be done at all.”

Peter Drucker (1909–2005) management consultant, educator and author.