



5 Productive work flows

Efficient processes

Improving repeat prescribing, W Cheshire

Repeat prescriptions were a source of continual frustration for staff and patients, until processes were redesigned using Lean principles

The idea

A practice in West Cheshire used quality improvement techniques from the Productive General Practice/ Releasing Time Programme to improve their repeat prescribing processes.

A facilitator from the programme visited the practice for a couple of sessions to support progress.

They undertook a waste walk and process mapped their repeat prescription process. Waste was identified in areas such as the reprinting of scripts, looking for scripts, dealing with pharmacy/patient enquiries, scripts waiting over 24 hours to be signed by a GP amongst several others.

Impact

The practice identified a number of ideas to reduce waste such as, educating patients about when to re-order their prescriptions, GPs review/signing of scripts in the main practice office and involving the pharmacist in the work they were doing. A partner pharmacist was invited to review the process map generated and noticed other areas for streamlining such as monthly and weekly blister packs that they could better pick-up, rather than the practice.

Communication between the practice and pharmacist has been improved, a whole series of faxes (often duplicates) have also stopped and saved time.

Collectively the actions have generated 'released time' of 556 hours on activities stopped. The practice equates this to £5k in cost.

Implementation tips

Don't overlook the impact that relatively small improvements to frequent tasks can make.

Use team techniques that examine everyday processes from a different perspective - you'll often find completely new improvements you could make.

Link(s)

jo.dawson@nhsiq.nhs.uk

www.nhsiq.nhs.uk/capacity-capability/productive-general-practice.aspx