Strategies for effective GP Engagement

Do your homework:

- Work out what your needs are and what the expected outcome is going to be prior to your first contact with the GP.
- Make contact with the local GP division. They will have an understanding of the Practice’s needs and experiences.
- What support or services can the Division provide to the clinic to implement CDM?
- Who is the most approachable contact? Names of the Practice Manager or Practice Nurse.
- Is the clinic already involved in other projects? Have there been adverse outcomes from previous projects undertaken?
- Does the Clinic have regular clinical meetings therefore more motivated and accepting of Practice visits?
- Make contact with the Practice Manager with a letter and then follow up with a phone call.
- Make an appointment with the Practice Manager to outline the project and discuss GP involvement.
- Confirm a key contact within the practice for ongoing liaison. (Practice Manager, Nurse or Receptionist)
- Set up 10 min appointment with GPs during a time which is convenient to them. Can be individual or during a clinic meeting.
- Communicate regularly and respond promptly to requests and referrals.
- Be realistic about time and effort required to engage GPs.
Barriers to effective GP Engagement:

- Time constraints of GPs.
- GPs are being asked to be involved in many projects.
- Not all GPs agree with multidisciplinary approach. They already coordinate patient care as part of their usual practice and the introduction of item numbers is seen as laborious and time wasting.
- Previous experiences; GPs engage a short term process or model and then funding stops.

Strategies to overcome barriers:

- Provide information that will capture GP interest. Make it relevant to them.
- Improved care and patient outcome.
- Increase in patient satisfaction.
- Ease of implementation.
- Financial gain.
- It is important to understand that a General Practice is operated as a Small Business and that the GPs are not salaried. Income is dependent on the number of patient consultations. Offer financial incentives to GP’s for time given for interviews, indicating that you value their involvement and appreciate how busy they are.
- Keep meetings concise and within allocated time.
- Be organised. Well managed change leads to less resistance and staff acceptance.
- Provide single coordinator therefore GP knows who to contact and how.
- Involve the Practice Manager and/or Practice Nurse who can liaise with GPs on your behalf.
- Maintain as much contact as possible
- Summary sheet
- Branding information
- Visits
- Presentations
- Be persistent
- Maintain on going relationship with GP Division
- Provide Information about services to which they can refer and keep it current.
- Provide feedback to GPs from other service providers.