

West Hertfordshire Hospitals NHS Trust Heart Failure Awareness 2014

Work had started on a review of the current Heart Failure service at our Trust last year with sponsorship from the Chief Executive. Process mapping sessions were held to identify the patient's journey through the hospital. Staff attended included Heart Failure Specialist Nurse, Cardiologists, Matrons, Senior Sisters, Cardiac Nurses, Palliative Care Consultant with interest in heart failure, Care of the Elderly Consultant and staff from A&E. Two pathways were identified, 'known' and 'unknown' and started to identify areas of delay to try and resolve and improve the patients' experience.

Launch of a Clinical Pathway

From this, a clinical pathway was developed and reviewed by appropriate clinical leads and finalised for dissemination prior to the launch on 12th May to tie-in with the Heart Failure Awareness day; It was deemed more appropriate to launch on a Monday rather than a Friday! There was particular focus of the pathway to be used in A&E, AAU and Ambulatory Care. Along with re-advertising of the e-learning module developed for nurses and Allied Healthcare professionals. The Heart Failure Nurse walked around some of the key launch areas to ensure on track and have received the pathway information. This was advertised through an e-update newsletter too.

Measuring Outcomes of HF Pathway

- LoS- ?reduce overnight hospital admission (Via Early Ambulatory Unit)
- ?increase number of referrals to Rapid Access Heart Failure Clinic (RAHFC)
- ?increase number of referrals to Cardiology
- ? reduction in readmission rates
- Seeking patient feedback

Measurements would be made for a period of time prior to the launch and after the launch with the expectation of more referrals following the launch.

Small changes put into practice following the mapping sessions included

- Screened BNP results to only receive 400ng/L or above from the lab
- Abnormal results telephoned through to ward to encourage teams to refer for echo earlier

The Heart Failure Nurse also presented at the Cardiology Clinical Governance meeting on 13th May findings of a trial RAHFC and launching the Heart Failure Clinical Pathway would also advertise the service to those keys areas especially Ambulatory Care. Some of the findings from the last National Heart Failure Audit report were presented at that meeting.

Re-advertising to the Clinical Commissioning Groups

To help with increasing the number of referrals to RAHFC service, links were made with new strategic leads at the Trust who meet with the local Clinical Commissioning Groups regularly, this was carried out simultaneously to the launch of the Clinical Pathway.