Airedale Hospital links up to its 50th nursing home

Over 2,000 residents in care homes are to benefit from round-the-clock urgent care using telemedicine. Airedale Hospital is working with technical partners, Involve, to roll out its telemedicine service to around 200 nursing and residential homes in Airedale, Bradford, Calderdale, Huddersfield, Lancashire, and Dartford as part of their newly launched joint venture “Immedicare” (www.immedicare.co.uk). The aim is to help relieve pressures on urgent care services.

The homes are linked to the Telehealth Hub based at Airedale NHS Foundation Trust which is run by the trust’s specialist nurses, 24-hours-a-day, seven-days-a-week. Ernest Towers, aged 93, is a resident at Sutton Lodge – the 50th care home to be provided with a telemedicine service.

The residential home, based in Sutton-in-Craven, which is part of the Orchard Care Homes Group, is linked to Airedale’s Telehealth Hub. This means that Ernest and hundreds of other residents can get medical help from hospital consultants or specialist nurses via a secure video link, if and when they need it, without having to leave the comfort of their home.

Michael Hebden, manager of Sutton Lodge, said: “It’s brilliant, we really appreciate having backup from the consultants and their medical team. We can always call if we have any doubts or queries about our residents or need a second opinion and that makes our staff feel more comfortable – especially out of normal surgery opening hours.

“Anything that reduces the time that our residents spend in A&E is good for us as it is so stressful for them to travel to hospital.

“Some weeks we will use it four or five times, others not at all.

“We’ve used it for advice on breathing complaints, a head injury, rashes, chest infections and the beauty is that the consultants or nurses can see the patient so clearly on screen.”

Sharing success at global event

Consultant Dr Richard Pope presented initial results of how telemedicine helps to keep people with long-term health conditions out of hospital to delegates at the King’s Fund Third Annual International Congress on Telehealth and Telecare 2013. The findings revealed how Airedale’s Telehealth Hub manages chronic illness effectively.

The study looked at 17 nursing and residential care homes linked to the Trust’s Telehealth Hub. It compared a 12 month period before introducing telemedicine with a year after it was used.

The findings for care homes linked up to the Telehealth Hub were:

- hospital admissions dropped 45 percent
- length of stay in hospital dropped 30 percent
- total use of bed days (the number of hospital bed days used by the cohort over the year) dropped 60 percent
- use of A&E dropped 69 percent.

For care homes that do not use telemedicine, their hospital admissions increased 11 percent, length of stay had risen seven percent and total use of bed days was up 18 percent.

Reducing admissions by around 20 percent saves the health economy between £310,000 to £1.06m per year.

The next stage will be to conduct a formal study with a control group and more detailed analysis.

First services in Cumbria

Telemedicine is set to prove its worth in rural areas as the first care home services in Cumbria has gone live. Cumbria CCG is funding this service for a batch of residential and nursing care services across the region and Laurels Home Care, based in Carlisle – which allows residents to remain as independent as possible in their own home – is now linked up to Airedale’s Telehealth Hub.
Staff at Ashville, in Idle, used their new telemedicine service for the first time to get round-the-clock care from specialist nurses at Airedale’s Telehealth Hub for one of its residents on New Year’s Eve.

The Bradford care home specialises in looking after elderly residents with dementia and is amongst the first wave of 50 nursing and residential care homes to go live before the end of February, funded by City and Bradford District Clinical Commissioning Groups (CCGs). Mrs Wendy Selby, manager of Ashville, said: “It can be a life-saver, we are so pleased to have got it during winter which is generally our busiest time with health issues.”

Dr Chris Harris, chair of Bradford’s transformation and integration group, said: “Telemedicine is a great development for Bradford as it’s going to help some of our most vulnerable patients get medical advice without having to go to hospital or call an out-of-hours doctor to visit.

“It’s a key step in our local Integrated Care for Adults programme and shows the value of joined up working between the NHS and our partners to provide support to our residents.

“Integrated care is all about joining up local services to provide the right care at the right place, first time – and this new technology ticks all the boxes in terms of bringing care closer to people’s homes. The CCGs are confident that the service will bring significant benefits to patients and provide a real alternative to other urgent care and emergency services, so helping to ease pressure on them.”

Rachel Thompson, practice manager from The Rockwell and Wrose GP surgery, said: “This is an exciting new development in the provision of medical care that offers potential benefits to both patients and the wider NHS.

“Like any new development it will need to be appropriately evaluated over time but we welcome this innovative approach to the provision of healthcare in our area.”

Round-the-clock care on screen

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Specialist support for patients at end of their lives

Nurses and consultants at Sue Ryder Manorlands Hospice have used telemedicine to extend the specialist advice service they provide for staff and their patients.

The charity, based in Oxenhope, now has senior doctor or specialist nurse available between 9am and 5pm, Mondays to Fridays, to have telemedicine consultations with care home staff in over 30 care homes in Airedale and Craven. Outside these times, the care homes can get advice from Airedale Hospital’s Telehealth Hub.

As Manorlands’ community team covers such a large rural area, from Bingley to Bentham, the telemedicine service has proved to be a cost effective way of delivering support and advice to patients and health and social care professionals.

This could include requests for help with dealing with the patients’ symptoms such as pain, nausea, vomiting and restlessness, or just for general support to staff.

There are currently around 150 patients who receive palliative care in their own home from Manorlands and the specialists nurses also provide advice to the GPs, district nurses and practice staff who help look after them.

Pat Mowatt, clinical nurse specialist and telemedicine lead at Sue Ryder Manorlands, said: “Telemedicine has helped us so much compared to just telephone contact as the added dimension of being able to see a patient enables us to judge more confidently what treatments or other care to recommend.

“During stressful times and especially out-of-hours, it has proved very reassuring for relatives who may need to get professional advice immediately.

“I was sceptical at first when we started to pilot the service, but I have come to see its real benefits. As time moves on I do think it will become the norm.”
Julia looks for funding opportunities

Julia Coletta is the new ehealth programme director for the region, hosted by Airedale NHS Foundation Trust.

Her role is to explore European funding opportunities and work with partners throughout Europe to spread good practice in the use of assisted living technologies, including telemedicine, to improve the health of patients.

This year she will be submitting a bid for funding from the Information Communication Technology (ICT) strand of ‘Horizon 2020’ an EU funding programme which aims to support ‘Living Healthy, Ageing Well’.

Julia, pictured below, said: “With A&E departments throughout the country full to bursting point and all wards facing capacity issues over the winter, Airedale is one of the hospitals that has grasped that telehealth can be a solution and has great benefits for rural areas.”

“Ever since I started working on this topic I quickly realised telehealth is not just about saving money, it’s about doing things differently and providing a swifter, more convenient service. Patients love it and so embracing telehealth is a win, win opportunity.”

A new helpline for patients who have a serious illness and may be in the last year of their lives has been launched across Airedale, Wharfedale and Craven.

The dedicated ‘Gold Line’ telephone number aims to provide one point of contact for patients and their carers for help and advice, 24-hours-a-day, seven-days-a-week, to support them in their preferred place of care wherever possible. Calls are answered by the team of experienced nurses based in Airedale’s Telehealth Hub, linked up to community-based teams, who can visit patients if necessary.

The pilot scheme is not expected to replace patients’ use of their GP and other community health care services during normal working hours, but aims to provide care when daytime services have closed.

Dr Helen Livingstone, palliative care consultant at Airedale NHS Foundation Trust, said: “We know that these patients want to spend as much time at home as possible and by providing extra support we hope the Gold Line will help this to happen. However, hospital admissions can also be arranged if required.”

The Gold Line service will support patients who are on the Gold Standards Framework (GSF). This project has been funded as part of a successful £420,000 bid from the Health Foundation – an independent charity working to improve healthcare in the UK – as part of its £4.6m ‘Shared Purpose’ programme, to use technology to improve the care for patients who are at the end of their life.

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Yorkshire’s telemedicine work earns European status

The Yorkshire and the Humber Telehealth Hub partnership (which includes Airedale NHS Foundation Trust, NHS Barnsley and the University of Hull) has become a top rated European reference site in England for good practice and innovation in the field of telehealth.

It is now one of 32 reference sites, under the European Innovation Partnership Active and Healthy Ageing Programme, which will share its learning throughout Europe to help improve the health of an ageing population. The bid, on behalf of the Yorkshire and Humber region, to become a reference site was awarded three stars – the only site in England to receive this maximum star rating.

As part of the regional application about experience in using telehealth to improve the health of patients, Airedale Hospital delivered telemedicine services, University of Hull delivered telemonitoring and a clinical triage service to heart failure patients and NHS Barnsley provided telephone based health coaching; telecoaching.

Ann Wagner, director of strategy and business development at Airedale NHS Foundation Trust, said: “We believe reference site status will attract more visitors from throughout Europe to the region to find out more about our wide range of work. We are really keen to learn more from other member states so that we can continue to improve our service.”

For more information: http://ec.europa.eu/research/innovation-union/index-en.cfm?section=active-healthy-ageing&pg=about
Middle East delegation sees how it’s done in Airedale

A prestigious Middle East delegation made a trip to Airedale to find out more about how hospital and primary care systems are being used in the UK.

The eight delegates included ministers and senior government officials in the field of health economy, education and information technology from Bahrain, Oman, Kuwait and Saudi Arabia. They were looking at potential investments in seamless systems, linking primary to hospital care, which improve the patient experience.

Airedale was chosen as a flagship hospital for how it uses technology to improve care for patients including telemedicine. It also has a patient administration system (PAS), developed and installed with technical partners TPP (providers of SyntmOne), that allows a single patient record to be shared between primary, secondary and social care professionals.

The delegation visited the hospital’s Telehealth Hub and The Ridge Medical Centre, in Bradford, to look at the interaction between primary and secondary care and referral systems. The practice is an early-adopter of technology-led innovations in providing healthcare.

Dr John Connolly, GP at The Ridge, said: “This visit was a great opportunity to explain the pressure which the NHS is under at the moment. We demonstrated how technology developments are being embraced by clinicians on the frontline to rise to the challenge to relieve the strain on emergency services and support the development of integrated care for patients with long term conditions.”

Success with telemedicine presented to national conference

A demonstration of how Airedale Hospital is using telemedicine to keep people out of hospital was given to delegates at the national HSJ Telehealth Conference in London.

Chief executive Bridget Fletcher, and consultant Richard Pope, of Airedale NHS Foundation Trust, presented the case study on 20 November which outlined how the Trust is increasing its use in nursing and residential homes, people’s own homes and prisons to help more people manage chronic illness effectively.

Rachel Cashman, head of collaboration for excellence for NHS England, gave an update on progress with the national initiative – “Delivering telehealth to 3 million lives” – which Airedale Hospital is helping to design.

Also discussed were effective telehealth solutions for out-of-hours surgeries, the risks and opportunities in bringing telehealth to mental health patients and how local authorities and the NHS are working together to provide better quality social care.

Date at Expo

Airedale Hospital has signed up to take part in Health and Care Innovation Expo 2014 – a national interactive event to showcase innovative work around integrated care and its benefits for patients.

Hosted by NHS England, it is being held at Manchester Central, on 3 and 4 March, for more than 10,000 workers within health and care fields.

Chief executive Bridget Fletcher is presenting in a ‘pop-up university’ on 3 March.

To register visit www.expo.nhs.uk

A new partnership has been formed between technical provider Involve and Airedale NHS Foundation Trust to deliver telemedicine throughout the region and nationwide.

It is called ‘Immedicare’ and provides clinical healthcare services through the Telehealth Hub based at Airedale Hospital.

Both founding organisations have been at the forefront of telemedicine service development over the last decade and understand how to successfully deliver services to a wide and varied client base.

They have supported, advised and connected patients, carers, nurses and clinicians across a full range of healthcare specialties and clinical needs.

Involve’s wealth of experience in providing quality visual collaboration solutions, combined with Airedale’s dynamic approach to healthcare, is bringing tremendous results for both parties, but most importantly, for the patients.

The benefits to these patients (and their families) are that lengthy waiting times and inconvenient hospital journeys (when time is too valuable to waste), are now things of the past. And allowing patients and residents to spend quality time in their care settings or home with the assurance that help and guidance is at hand, literally at the touch of button, has become a true reality.

Both parties are excited to be ‘on board’ with this unique proposition, which is gathering momentum. As a result we are having conversations nationwide as our partnership is ideally suited to wider NHS strategies. Being able to provide a real solution to some of today’s health problems is a fantastic achievement and via Immedicare, this is exactly what we are continuing to do as our new partnership grows.

Visit www.immedicare.co.uk

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