Development of Health Technology Assessment Skills in a Drug Information Centre

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1- Drug Information and Research Centre
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3- Program for Assessment of Technology in Health
Background

• HTA use by front-line health professionals is rare and difficult
• Pharmacist activities could be enhanced by HTA information
• DI services well positioned to support uptake
• DI pharmacists not trained to evaluate/translate HTA information
DIRC Snapshot

• Services
  – Drug information call centre
    • Health professionals
    • Public (Telehealth)
    • 75,000 inquiries per year
  – Medical writing
    • Pharmacists and other health professionals
  – Educational programs
• Over 40 pharmacists (FT/PT)
• Unbiased, evidence-based, timely
CADTH Capacity-Building Grants

• Support and **grow networks** of health HTA producers and users across Canada

• Increase the application of HTA in policy formulation and **decision making**

• Promote and expand partnerships to better utilize existing capacity and resources, and reduce duplication of effort
Project Aim

• Enhance DIRC’s skills at assessing and interpreting HTA information
• Incorporate HTA information into:
  – client inquiries
  – publications
Expected Outcomes

• Enhance development and final content of DIRC’s publications and services
• Communication and translation to clients will change to reflect HTA understanding
• Enhance DIRC’s ability to undertake, understand and disseminate HTA information in Canada
Partners

PATH

Centre for Evaluation of Medicines

DIRC
Program Design

• Needs assessment of pharmacists
  – Full-time, part-time, casual
• Education model development
• Training and mentoring by CEM/PATH
• Evaluation
• Adaptation of publications
• One-on-one mentoring/train-the-trainer
Modules

• Introduction
• Systematic Literature Review
• Costing
• Cost-Effectiveness Analysis
• Cost-Utility Analysis & Cost-Benefit Analysis
• Decision Analysis
• Treatment of Uncertainty in HTAs / Decision Rules
• Critical Appraisal of HTAs / Pharmacoeconomics Studies & Health Care Programs
• Knowledge Transfer 1 and 2
Lesson Format

• Pre-readings
• Pre-lecture exercises
• Group lecture (1.5 hrs)
• Group exercises (0.5 hrs)
• Post-lecture exercises

• All sessions digitally recorded (DVD)
  – Viewed by rest of staff
Training Highlights
Mentorship

• Give specific training to staff leaders to act as mentors to new staff
• One-on-one training with CEM/PATH faculty
• Project included:
  – Knowledge translation
  – Health economics
Key Deliverables

• Needs assessments
• Digital suite of training videos to maintain staff training and education
• Process of reviewing and incorporating HTA info
  – Written
    • Revised publication templates
  – Verbal
    • Call handling prompts
• Infrastructure to support ongoing incorporation of HTA information
Evaluation: Methods

• Sample: all participating DIRC pharmacists

• Measurements:
  – Pre-module needs assessment
  – Surveys after each module
  – Post-program survey
Outcomes – Call Centre

- Search process for inquiries
  - Includes HTA databases when appropriate
- Translation of information
  - Facilitated by training provided
  - Call prompting of responses
Outcomes – Medical Writing

• Search process for inquiries
  – more systematic and structured
  – routinely search all HTA databases

• Where appropriate, HTA information incorporated into documents
  – May include basis cost comparison, or a summary of a more detailed economic analysis, as appropriate.
Expansion in Medical Writing Services Information

• Revenue increase over 200%
Post-Project Activities

• Optimal Searching Initiative
  – Best practices in standardizing searches that are effective and efficient and can meet required timelines.

• HTA Grants
  – 2006-07 – New publication for small hospitals
  – 2007-08 – Symposium for the media on effective use of HTA information
Future Activities

• Expansion of call centre services across Canada
• Education program expansion across Canada
• Growth in medical writing
  – More clients
  – More sophisticated projects
  – Increasing specialization of staff
Key Learnings

• Partner commitment to success essential
  – Highly collaborative
  – Understanding of current and future HTA needs

• Ongoing work needed to maintain competence and skills
  – Current clients do not require HTA data

• Digital recording assured staff skill continuity
  – Continued competence despite turnover
For More Information

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