

Working together to show a common need for continuing professional development could result in SHA funding

Guest Writer: Amanda Crundall, Heart Failure Nurse Specialist, Doncaster PCT

As a Heart Failure Nurse Specialist for Doncaster PCT, Amanda Crundall wants to raise understanding in the community about the prevalence of heart failure. In order to achieve this she regularly teaches sessions on the management of heart failure and palliative care and also runs taster sessions on heart failure for community staff. Amanda makes nurses see that that they can improve patients' quality of life, prevent disease progression and improve life expectancy. After completing these training sessions many express an interest in taking their education further.

As a new trainer for Education for Health Amanda is keen to help nurses receive the benefits that could be gained by studying towards a diploma in Heart Failure. The course would give nurses more credibility and increase their levels of confidence. Patients would feel more secure in the knowledge that they are being reviewed by someone who has a sound knowledge and understanding of their condition and by someone who will empower them to manage their own condition.

Amanda recognises however that securing funds for continued professional development in primary care is not easy. Julie Catchpole is a nurse with experience in this area and Amanda contacted her for advice. Julie suggested that Amanda demonstrated a need for the Heart Failure Training in the South Yorkshire area and then applied to SHA for funding. Julie said: "I have worked with SHA's in the past and I have learnt that if you can demonstrate a real need for accredited training in your area then the SHA are very likely to award you with the funding"

There is considerable evidence to show that nurse-led care of heart failure patients is associated with substantially reduced admission rates in hospitals. So when Amanda approached Nurse Managers in her area to ask them if she could canvas their nurses with an interest flyer, they said yes knowing that the PCT would benefit from having staff that were appropriately qualified as this would lead to a reduction in hospital use and medical costs.

Response from nurses to Amanda's flyer was immediate and she now has a list of 23 practice and community nurses who want to complete the Education for Health Heart Failure Diploma!

Julie will take the list of names to a South Yorkshire Health Authority meeting. Amanda is really excited to hear their decision, she said: "Hopefully we will get the funding agreed. Training nurses to diploma level will improve the way that we treat and manage patients and it will enable patients to be more involved in understanding and managing their own condition. Not only will we be improving quality life but we will be reducing costs at the same time".

Find out more about the Diploma in Heart Failure at:

http://www.educationforhealth.org.uk/pages/heartsave/Heart_Failure.asp

Learn about how you can become an Education for Health Trainer at:

http://www.educationforhealth.org.uk/pages/about_us/trainers_network.asp