Making the case for investing in health information

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The good……

• The policy around health information has never been stronger
• Patient and public engagement and shared decision-making is taking centre stage
• Quality is firmly on the agenda
• The business case for investment in information is strong
• Awareness of the importance of consumer health information, and interest in it is increasing
The not so good......

- Information continues to have a low profile and limited investment
- It is not commissioned or provided routinely
- Information services are under threat or closing
- Much information is still poor in quality
- There is a great deal of unnecessary duplication
- Large sections of the population still don’t receive the right (or any) information
- Information provision is not measured, audited or evaluated well
Challenges for the public

• Medical advances and the speed of change
• Information overload
• The shift towards choice and patient centred care
• The Internet
• Lack of critical appraisal skills – being able to interpret evidence and what that means
• Health literacy and digital exclusion
• Often anxious or unwell when looking for information
• Don’t know what they don’t know – need support
Setting the scene

• How to provide high quality care in the face of rising demand and tightening financial constraints?
• Improving access to high quality health information and support = big part of the solution
• Needs a culture change as well as infrastructure and extra resources
• More collaborative approach – health professionals and others acting as ‘infomediaries’
• Lack of guidance and support – widening existing inequalities
Making the Case for Information

- Evidence on the benefits of providing (and the harms of not providing) high quality information and support
- Business case for information provision
- Identify gaps in evidence and areas for further work
Definitions and scope of the report

Information and support to help people understand, manage and/or make decisions about their health, condition or treatment

High quality information meets the needs of users, and empowers them to make choices and take control of their health and wellbeing

Includes information produced in any format

Excludes information relating to:
• public health and social care
• the transparency agenda
Methodology

Extensive review of academic & grey literature
• 170 academic research articles
• 200 documents from the grey literature

In-depth interviews with 15 practitioners, commissioners and health policy, research and information specialists

Four expert reviewers
Investing in high quality information and support is not just the right thing to do for patients and the public.

It is a financial and clinical imperative with positive impacts on:

- patient experience, clinical effectiveness and safety
- service utilisation and health costs
- people’s’ health behaviour and status
Providing high quality health information has positive impacts on:

1. **Patient experience, clinical effectiveness and safety**
   - shared decision-making, self-management and self-care, realistic expectations, confidence in relationships, reduced stress and better quality of life and greater patient engagement

2. **Service utilisation and health costs**
   - Reduced health inequalities, better adherence to treatment and medications, increased patient safety

3. **People’s health behaviour and status**
   - More appropriate screening, reductions in major surgery and variation in procedures, reduced demand for primary care, more appropriate use of services, reduced medical errors, malpractice claims and litigation costs and fewer hospital admissions
What works?

• One size does not fit all
• Quality is paramount
• Information must be converted to knowledge and understanding
• Written information aids recall and understanding
• Information needs change over time
• Simpler materials, visual aids and alternative formats help to address health literacy
What works?

- Web-based solutions are not the only answer
- People need specialist support to help them access, process and act upon reliable and relevant health information
- Information alone will only have a limited effect
- Significant behaviour change will only be achieved by information plus more active educational support
What can you do?

• Analyse and demonstrate the value that health information provides to your users, supporters, organisation and communities.
• Use the Case for Information to produce a business case for investment in your library
• Use the case for information as a starting point for developing partnerships with other organisations - NHS and social care, local authority, voluntary and commercial sectors and Healthwatch
• Share the Case for Information with the decision makers - your line manager, Director, Chief Executive or Board.
• Become a champion for health information!
Patient Information Forum

- The organisation for people working in health information
- UK wide, cross sector, independent, non-profit
- We share good practice, raise standards and champion health information
- Lots of membership benefits including a newsletter, website with members only area, events and annual conference

www.pifonline.org.uk
Any Questions?

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