Telehealth and Diabetes in NHS Ayrshire & Arran

Background

Diabetes is a progressive condition that can have devastating effects on health, however evidence shows many of the complications are reduced or delayed in onset with intensive diabetes management. There has been an upward trend in the prevalence of diabetes and it is likely this will continue for the foreseeable future. It has become imperative that those involved in planning and delivering diabetes services, and people living with the condition, work together to develop effective and sustainable solutions. Telehealth has a vital role to play in the pursuit of these goals.

Aim

The aim was to fully integrate telehealth solutions into diabetes care pathways and to make sure that they are not an ad-hoc or bolt on to the service.

Five main workstreams were identified:
1. Establishment of self management/Telehealth hub
2. Diasend
3. Florence simple text messaging service
4. Empowering people with Diabetes by Introducing TeleHealth (EDITH)
5. Telehealth on Diet and Diabetes (TODD)

Methodology

The Diabetes Managed Clinical Network in Ayrshire and Arran took the following steps towards integrating telehealth into diabetes services; established a telehealth working group with clear governance via the MCN Education subgroup to the relevant management groups for Diabetes and Technology Enabled Care (TEC), undertook a review of infrastructure to ensure that it is flexible and sustainable enough to support telehealth into the future, reviewed telehealth pathways and agreed telehealth workstreams to be progressed as part of the NHS Ayrshire & Arran Technology Enabled Care Programme.

Conclusion

The Diabetes MCN will continue to work towards embedding technology enabled care in to local diabetes care pathways and explore further opportunities for telehealth to support people living with diabetes.

Outcomes

1. Self Management TeleHealth Hub:
   Infrastructure changes were required to support current and future telehealth developments; introduction of a new automated telephone system due to go live May 2018, development of a multi-user IT system for structured education to support administration of self management programmes due Summer 2018, established social media presence - Facebook and Twitter accounts live and an ongoing programme of care pathway updates which include telehealth.

2. Diasend:
   Current activity is focused on; service review to establish Diasend in community clinics and gestational/maternity services, clear inclusion criteria in diabetes care pathways for Diasend, accurate recording of Diasend use and impact on self.

3. Florence:
   Insulin Self Management pathway introduced to extend self management input by six weeks to people who have attended an intervention relating to insulin management i.e. titration. Service is in early phase so no results available at present. A Florence pathway for weight management for people at risk of developing type 2 diabetes and people newly diagnosed with type 2 diabetes is under development and will be integrated into the wider prevention framework if outcomes are favourable.

4. Empowering people with Diabetes by Introducing TeleHealth (EDITH):
   EDITH is a structured Diabetes Specialist Nurse Telehealth consultation which follows on from a self management intervention, it is person centred and designed to improve self management skills and results to date have been positive with feedback highlighting the fact that people appreciate not having to attend face to face appointments, that the support is at a time or method that suits them and staff have highlighted that it has reduced delays in treatment/appointments.

5. Telehealth on Diet and Diabetes (TODD):
   TODD is a Dietetic led telehealth intervention designed to support the person achieve dietetic outcomes through behaviour change and improved self management. Following positive feedback from a small test of change at University Hospital Ayr the project has been extended to University Hospital Crosshouse and the TODD methodology is being reviewed for use in other services within the dietetic department.