Media information

For immediate use

Telehealth is taking off in North Ayrshire
Self-management week 28 September – 2 October 2015

Patients in North Ayrshire are continuing to reap the benefits of telehealth home health monitoring as the use of the technology continues to grow.

NHS Ayrshire & Arran began its telehealth programme in 2011. Telehealth allows patients with long-term conditions such as Chronic Heart Failure (CHF), Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease (COPD) and Diabetes to monitor and self-manage their condition at home, reducing the need to be admitted into hospital.

Patients have a small touch screen device, called a pod (similar to a tablet or smart phone), that asks them simple questions about how they feel. It can also take vital signs information such as blood pressure, oxygen saturation and weight, and contains the patient’s individual self-management plan.

Patients are then able to self-manage their condition according to their results - for example, if a patient’s blood pressure is slightly elevated, the test alerts them to take extra medication.

The results are also uploaded for review by specialist nurses based in University Hospital Crosshouse. If results are found to be concerning, the team make contact with the patient and arrange for the appropriate support or care to be provided.

One patient who has benefited from telehealth is Mrs Jane Lee from Irvine in North Ayrshire.
Mrs Lee was diagnosed with CHF and during 2014 had to be admitted into hospital five times. Mrs Lee was referred to the CHF Specialist Nurse Service within North Ayrshire Health and Social Care Partnership at University Hospital Crosshouse.

Through this service, Mrs Lee was offered telehealth to help her to monitor and manage her condition.

Mrs Lee said: “I had never heard of telehealth or home health monitoring before the nurse spoke to me about it. I was a bit nervous about taking my own blood pressure but the nurse explained everything to me and reassured me that I would be able to do it.

“When the technician arrived to install the equipment, he showed me how everything works, and I realised how easy it is to use. It gives me confidence seeing the results and knowing that my nurse is checking them daily.

“Using the equipment every day means I can keep an eye on my weight. If my weight creeps up with no explanation, I know I have to increase my medication to bring it back down. This also helps me to manage my diabetes which is a big benefit to me.”

Mrs Lee has had one unavoidable admission to hospital this year but feels that this would be more if she didn’t have the equipment.

Mrs Lee added: “As far as I am concerned the telehealth service and my CHF specialist nurse has made my heart failure easier to cope with.”
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Living it Up is an award winning self-management hub which empowers people aged 50 and over to use technology to manage their health and wellbeing and to be better connected to their communities.

Ends

Notes to editors

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Photograph: 240915telehealthNA(3): Mrs Jane Lee of Irvine, pictured using her home pod.

Notes to editors:

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