



TIME TO HIT THE (VIRTUAL) BOOKS

Martin Parker

A crucial element in Health Care Home’s long range goal of future proofing New Zealand’s General Practices is the creation of new roles designed to improve efficiency ‘behind the scenes’, strengthen practices and enable doctors and nurses to do what they do best – see and help their patients.

Skill-mixing is an integral part of this process, and the role of Primary Health Care Assistant is a prime example. The PHCA is someone who can become integral within the practice, bringing both primary care clinical and administrative skills to bear.

Such a break with traditional demarcations requires training and education, of course, and it was to address this need that a new level 4 NZQA qualification was formulated, and has recently started its third intake of students.

Carol Slade, Primary Care Assistant at Newlands Medical Centre, was one of those who found themselves back in school last year, albeit it in a virtual classroom, with most of the modular coursework being done online. “I joined Newlands as a receptionist two and a half years ago,” she recalls, “I was always keen to do more, and when the PCA was expanded to full-time and job-shared I really decided to go for it. I started the course in February 2016, finishing at the beginning of last December.



Carol Slade - Primary Care assistant at Newlands Medical Centre

The opportunity to broaden her range and work at the top of her scope was, Carol admits, a challenge at times. “It’s many years since my formal education ended, so going back to studying was the scariest element, as well as – at times – the most frustrating.” She was, however, well supported in facing the challenge. “Gill Freeman (Nurse Manager at Newlands) was my support person here. We’d set a couple of hours aside here each week to go through what it was I was working on, with her offering constructive criticism and suggestions. As is so often the case, the reality turned out to be a lot less scary than I’d feared.”

As for the upside and benefits of doing the course, Carol is in no doubt. “The most exciting times were those ‘lightbulb’ moments, when I suddenly got things and it all came into focus,” she says, “Overall, the course was hugely beneficial in teaching me why things are done the way they are, and it really brought clarity and focus to the work I do here.”

The course itself is, she points out, still in the process of developing and learning. “It’s still evolving, and there are things being done this year that are different from last year, with it being split into a clinical component and a business module. But they’re open to hearing issues and suggestions, and they’ve taken our comments on board.”

Does she have any advice for someone thinking about taking the course? “Don’t be intimidated by the study,” she laughs, “It’s well worth the effort for the clarity it offers you about why you do what you do.”

HEALTH CARE HOME BRIEFS

LEAN PEER REVIEW

What connects Toyota with Health Care Home General Practices in New Zealand? The answer, in a word, is 'LEAN'. LEAN is a management methodology that was developed into its modern form by Toyota's car production plants, and its primary characteristic is – as its name suggests – a relentless focus on the elimination of waste in all its forms.

Waste crops up in every aspect of an organisation – no less in health care than car manufacture – and eliminating it means better outcomes for everyone: patients, practitioners and administrators. LEAN is integral to the Health Care Home model, and it offers practices a range of tools, techniques and ideas that can help them both improve their performance and create happier work environments.

In order to increase understanding of LEAN methodology and provide support towards LEAN implementation among Health Care Home practices, a number of LEAN Peer Review workshops will be organised annually. Below is the timeline when these workshops take place this year, so look out for our invitations and save the dates!

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| 21st June 2017 | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Team boards and stand-ups• Standardisation (Consult rooms/ admin area) |
| Sep 2017 | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• One-point lessons• Process mapping• Problem solving |
| Dec 2017 | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• 5S• Kanban• Leadership |



Jo Henson, Change Facilitator Expert Lean, is working with a practice to capture a current process

OUTSTANDING DROPPED CALL RESULTS

Frustration is probably the word to describe our feeling of being put on hold while calling the practice. It is even worse when we are feeling unwell and need to talk to a doctor as soon as possible. With Health Care Home practices, a telephony system is set up to help reduce patients' wait time. Recent dropped call rate at Hora Te Pai Health Service has shown outstanding results. Out of 3221 incoming calls, only 25 calls were dropped or abandoned from 1st March to 31st March. This is a big achievement <1%.

Congratulations to Hora Te Pai Health Service!!!