

National Telecare and Telehealth conference

The National Telecare and Telehealth conference entitled 'Change the way you see Telecare and Telehealth today' was held in Brighton in November. Jan Boulding attended the conference on behalf of Alston Healthcare, joining 630 other delegates.

This was a national event which gave the opportunity to network with companies, commissioners and providers from across the UK and a few from abroad. There was an emphasis on sharing and education from the keynote speakers, workshops and exhibition. The focus in previous years had been on Telecare, however this year the emphasis was firmly on Telehealth, demonstrating the massive growth in the area. The Telecare Standards Association presented the new Telehealth code of conduct.

A large variety of equipment was on display in the exhibition hall and it was apparent just how much assistive technology had moved forward within the last year.

The speakers of note were:

Tim Ellis, Health Programme Manager for Whole System Demonstrators (Department of Health) gave an update on the Whole System Demonstrators – national pilots to thoroughly investigate the benefits of telehealth.

Julie Jones, Chief Executive of Social Care Institute for Excellence gave a presentation on Innovation in social care – is it fit for purpose

Barbara Stuttle, National Clinical Lead for Nursing & Midwifery explained how patients were benefiting from telecare and telehealth in South West Essex PCT

To make the conference entertaining in a technology relevant way, Jon Bentley from the gadget show spoke and there was a Star Trek theme across the whole conference.

What is Alston Healthcare?

Alston Healthcare (a social enterprise) has been awarded grant funding from the Department of Health Social Enterprise Pathfinder fund to look at ways of improving health and social care using e-health solutions.

A steering group meets regularly and includes staff from the GP Surgery, Hospital, Age Concern, League of Friends and community. Cybermoor Services is the accountable body for the Department of Health.

Social Enterprise Event

Social enterprises and NHS staff met at Penrith Co-op to gain a greater understanding of how they could work together in 2009. Social enterprises in the health and social care sector met in the morning to identify common issues and potential ideas for collaboration. Over lunch, Cumbria NHS staff explained their roles and how the commissioning process worked. The event helped to clear up some confusion on commissioning and the definition of social enterprise. More importantly, it demonstrated that there was enthusiasm on both sides to look at new ways of working in a more "joined up way." The only drawback was that there was not enough time to explore all the issues in depth.

A full report on the event can be downloaded from www.alstonhealthcare.co.uk/events

Contact us

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Telehealth update

We are now liaising with NHS commissioners and clinicians to see how telehealth could fit into the delivery of healthcare in Eden. The telehealth service aims to:

- Free up nurses to spend more time with patients who have more demanding conditions.
- Save patients and nursing staff from having to make unnecessary journeys.

In order to measure the benefits of the telehealth service, we are working with the University of Cumbria to draw in funding to evaluate the trial service which we hope to launch later this year.

We are also testing our DigiTV site which will allow patients in Alston to get more information about local healthcare, book appointments and organise repeat prescriptions all through their TV.

Video Assessment update

The video project to link Alston and Penrith hospitals is slowly moving forward. The Cumbria Wide Informatics group have received the supporting information they requested about upgrading the broadband link into Alston and we are now waiting for their decision.

When the link is ordered, BT then have to upgrade the line, which will be a lengthy process.

Part of Alston Healthcare's vision is to work with the other community hospitals around the County we are now discussing the potential to link Keswick and Penrith hospital with commissioners. We are keen to get something working but recognise that there are a number of other changes taking place at the moment which take precedent.

Pathfinder Evaluation

The Department of Health Social Enterprise Unit has focused Alston Healthcare as part of its evaluation of how social enterprises are faring with the NHS. At an event in November, Daniel found out about the issues affecting other projects such as problems getting contracts in place, putting together funding packages and a rapidly changing environment all around them. You can download the interim report from the Alston Healthcare website.

EVENTS

Tunstall Telehealth Events

If you are interested in finding out more about the benefits of telehealth, Tunstall are organising events in London (28th January) and Sheffield (3rd February) to help you find out more. Clinicians will explain their experiences of telehealth services based on trial projects. You can download more information from the Tunstall site by clicking [here](#).

Social Enterprise Coalition - Health and Care Forum

To learn more about social enterprise in Health, this event takes place in Birmingham, 10 February 2009. The event will look at new developments for social enterprises in the health and social care markets and the opportunities these present for existing and new social enterprises. [View the programme and register.](#)

The Team

Goodbye Collette!

We are sad to say farewell to Collette Eames who has now moved to work full time with the commissioning team at Cumbria NHS. Everyone involved with Alston Healthcare wishes her all the best in her new role.

Daniel Heery - Project Supervisor

Daniel raises finance for Alston Healthcare and is responsible for overall management of the project. He has a background in rural development and technology projects.

Chris Buckingham, Registered Nurse and Nurse Advisor

Project Manager Video Link

Chris' role is to pioneer video technology and e-health for patient assessment.

Jan Boulding, Registered Nurse and Nurse Lecturer Project Manager Telecare and Telehealth

Jan's main role is to manage and evaluate aspects of the project related the use of telecare and telehealth products; to work in collaboration with our health and social care partners.

Keep up to date with the project at www.alstonhealthcare.co.uk