

Caring Choices: A Catalyst for Medication Management Innovation

Diffusion of innovations is essentially a social process. Early adopters, such as Caring Choices, actively seek out innovative solutions to real-world problems. If successful, such early adopters often share their experience with others and shepherd those who previously hesitated to adopt.

For the past ten years, Caring Choices and partner Home Health Care Management have successfully used a medication dispensing device to improve older adult's medication adherence. To encourage diffusion of this promising device, Caring Choices recently received funding from the Center for Technology and Aging to share their successful experience with four organizations and to help shepherd the adoption of the device within the organizations. Caring Choices was one of five grantees to receive a Medication Optimization Diffusion Grant from the Center.

According to Caring Choices President Barbara Hanna, RN "the program will promote both increased quality of care and adherence to often complicated and confusing medication schedules for the elderly. Medication mismanagement issues are of great concern to our agency and may be a cause of unnecessary hospitalizations and premature institutionalization of seniors. Approximately 90% of older adults use one or more medications per week, 40% take five or more medications and 12%

use 10 or more medications per week. Helping seniors to better manage their medications can improve well-being and allow them to remain independent in their homes."

The grant-funded program will utilize Philips Medication Dispensing (PMD) devices and service. The PMD device reminds the client when to take their pills, dispenses them, and if the client does not push the button to dispense the pills, the machine will call a caregiver to alert them of the problem. The device holds a supply of pills that will last 10 to 40 days, depending on the number of pills a person takes each day.

The program aims to increase medication adherence, enhance quality of life, reduce avoidable hospitalizations or emergency room visits, and decrease



Barbara Hanna, President of Caring Choices and Project Director for CTA-funded "Medication Dissemination Project Utilizing PMD Technology"

non-paid caregiver stress. Jennifer Lillibridge, RN, PhD, a professor from the California State University, Chico School of Nursing, is evaluating project data.

Caring Choices will train the following four partner organizations, with plans to deploy the Philips PMD in the homes of 100 older adults. Philips Lifeline is donating 100 PMD devices and supplying internet monitoring free of charge for the project (for more information, see: <http://www.managemypills.com/content/>).

Partner Organizations:

- Eskaton Senior Residences and Services, Sacramento California
- Asian Community Center, Sacramento California
- Alternative Home Care, Sherman Oaks California
- Visiting Nurse Association of the Inland Counties, Riverside California

Aging Services of California, another collaborative partner, is encouraging the adoption of this technology by disseminating the project information to 400 plus member agencies and bringing the information to the attention of state policy makers through its advocacy and policy channels.

Philips Medication Dispensing Device



Project Collaborators

Caring Choices

Caring Choices (www.caring-choices.org) provides special low- or no-cost community services to Northern California residents. Caring Choice programs include Fall Prevention, R.A.D. (Recreation and Dreams for Kids with Cancer), Services for HIV/AIDS, and Relay for Life. Established in 1993, Caring Choices is a 501(c)(3) organization located in Chico, California.

The Center for Technology and Aging

The Center for Technology and Aging (techandaging.org) supports more rapid adoption and diffusion of technologies that enhance independence and improve home and community-based care for older adults. Through grants, research, public policy involvement and development of practical tools and best practice guidelines, the Center serves as an independent, non-profit resource for improving the quality and cost-effectiveness of long-term care services. The Center was established with funding from The SCAN Foundation (thescanfoundation.org) and is affiliated with the Public Health Institute (phi.org) in Oakland, CA.