Quality improvement – training for better outcomes

_Briefing note for finance directors – what does this mean for me?

“In order to improve efficiency and learning from best practice, while also improving quality we should not lose the ability to utilise the resource of junior doctors as a communication channel of good practice between organisations as they experience and observe different best practice during their training”

Kevin Downs, Director of Finance & Performance, Derby Teaching Hospitals NHS FT

What is this?
A report containing a set of recommendations aimed at aligning efforts to embed quality improvement as a core component of all medical education and training.

Who is making these recommendations?
The Academy of Medical Royal Colleges, together with a wide range of 35 stakeholder groups across the UK, including representatives from trainees, the GMC, patients, employers and the BMA.

What are the recommendations?
The recommendations arise from four work-streams; curriculum; education, learning and development; mapping examples in practice; strategic and supporting infrastructure. In brief, they are summarised as:

- It is essential to embed quality improvement into undergraduate and postgraduate medical training
- Every individual and organisation involved in medical education has a role to play in supporting trainees to make a difference
- The strength of quality improvement activity is how multi-professionals work and learn together, involving our patients in improving patient care
- Report includes examples of curricula content, how to deliver training, and examples of good practice, bringing the practicalities of quality improvement in action to life
- Transmission between organisations of best practice and new ideas for quality improvement and improved efficiency.
Three things I will do to put these recommendations into practice

1. Consider how all staff can become skilled in continuous improvement, but in particular think about how trainees can be supported using these recommendations
2. Work with the board and the whole organisation to ensure members understand quality improvement, become skilled in improvement methodology, and all staff actively support trainees in their improvement work.
3. Work with the organisation’s Transformation Team to ensure they are aware of junior doctors as a source of new ideas and alternative best practice.

What else is relevant to me as a finance director?

- Continuous improvement should be at the heart of healthcare organisations and transformation of our patient pathways is key to the future
- Although we already excel and provide world class patient care in many ways, there is always room for improvement and learning from others.
- Everyone in healthcare should know about improvement and have a set of basic improvement skills, so we are not always reliant on expert help to get started
- Existing consultants should be aware junior doctors are a repository of alternative best practice utilised in other organisations and use this to encourage change in their own organisations for the improvement of both efficiency and patient care.
- The thing that will really make a difference to patients is trainee doctors who are able to drive improvement even more than currently, and new consultants who will start work with knowledge of quality improvement as good as their speciality knowledge – organisations should learn to utilise this opportunity to help meet the financial challenges of the future.

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