

46. CREATING A DEDICATED & EFFECTIVE PATHWAY FOR CHRONIC DISEASE PATIENTS

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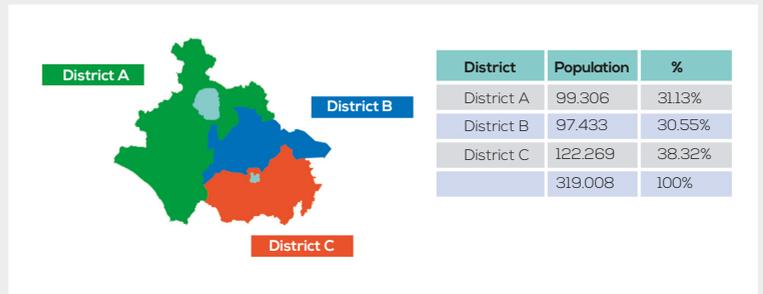


BACKGROUND:

The Local Health Unit (ASL) in Viterbo, Italy wanted to improve the quality of its patient care. It focused first on expanding its control and monitoring of patients with chronic diseases. It adopted a 'smart' approach, in order to develop a dedicated and effective pathway that would channel healthcare services to these patients. It also identified ways of reducing healthcare expenditure on these services.

OBJECTIVES:

- Focus on the main target audience – patients with diabetes, cardiac decompensation and chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD)
- Build an organisational model based on Operational Centres
- Involve hospital and territory healthcare services
- Use telemedicine tools to increase efficiency



Map showing three districts covered by ASL.
 Source: Azienda Unità Sanitaria Locale Viterbo

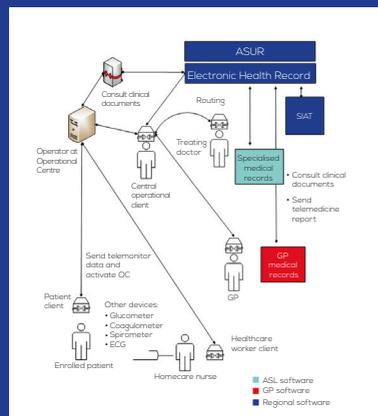
METHODS:

The key project stakeholders identified were patients, Operational Centre operators (doctors), family doctors, hospital doctors and homecare nurses. Support was first gained from the Directorate General to initiate and drive the change process forward. A diverse set of clinical stakeholders (doctors and nurses) were involved in designing an improved organisational process, and were trained to support the implementation of the process.

The patient pathway was mapped out. Several telemedicine and software tools – including glucometers, spirometers and electrocardiograms (ECGs) – were chosen to facilitate the staff's work and improve patient care. Automatic parameter-related alerts (e.g. for glycosylated haemoglobin) and telemonitoring were also introduced.

Other information technology (IT) tools were adopted to facilitate data exchange among the Operational Centres and various stakeholders – including electronic medical records (EMR)/electronic health records (EHR), and an Internet of Things (IoT) gateway connecting diverse devices.

IT-enabled pathway for chronic disease patients at ASL Viterbo.
 Source: Azienda Unità Sanitaria Locale Viterbo



RESULTS:

What has been achieved?

- ✓ Chronic care patient movement reduced
- ✓ Timely treatments
- ✓ Time saved and stress reduced for healthcare professionals
- ✓ Provision of multidisciplinary care involving all stakeholders
- ✓ New telemedicine and software tools integrated and widely adopted
- ✓ Improved information flows
- ✓ Cost savings

TAKE-AWAYS:

What worked well?

- ✓ Obtaining the commitment of the Directorate General to steer the change process
- ✓ Involving all the clinical stakeholders (doctors and nurses) in designing the organisational process
- ✓ Providing appropriate training to all operators (organisational and technical)
- ✓ Using telemedicine and software tools to facilitate staff's work
- ✓ Establishing an Internet of Things (IoT) gateway to connect diverse devices
- ✓ Integrating all software to maximise data exchange

