

Engaging, Empowering, Escalating: Supporting consumers to act if concerned. Patients as Partners

Introduction

R.E.A.C.H (Recognise, Engage, Act, Call, Help) is a patient and family-centred approach to escalating care which, acknowledges that patients and families often recognise subtle changes in their condition even before they become clinically evident.

The R.E.A.C.H program is an initiative of the Clinical Excellence Commission (CEC) and builds on the surf lifesaving analogy used in the 'Between the Flags' program, by encouraging families to 'put their hands in the air' to signal a child is 'in trouble' and reach out for help.

Aim

- To successfully implement a patient and family activated escalation of care process in all inpatient areas throughout The Children's Hospital at Westmead (CHW) by December 2012.



The R.E.A.C.H acronym

Method

In 2010 representatives from CHW joined the CEC's *Patient and Family Activated Rapid Response Working Group*, and agreed to be a lead trial site for the R.E.A.C.H. program

A local, multidisciplinary project team was formed and worked collaboratively with staff and consumers to prepare for implementation.

An organisation wide communication plan was implemented and consisted of 'all user' emails, a dedicated 'Project page' on the intranet and presentations at various departmental meetings and forums.

An education program was developed for existing and new staff supported by 25 Clinical Champions from throughout the organisation.

Rapid Response Team activity was evaluated to identify the potential impact of R.E.A.C.H.

Together with the CEC and CHW Family Advisory Council, a 'paediatric specific' information brochure was developed for families.

Results

R.E.A.C.H was implemented in all inpatient areas on 12 November 2012.

11 families, from five different ward areas, have independently called for the Rapid Response Team since implementation. This number of escalations is within the range expected of a facility of this size, based on overseas experience.

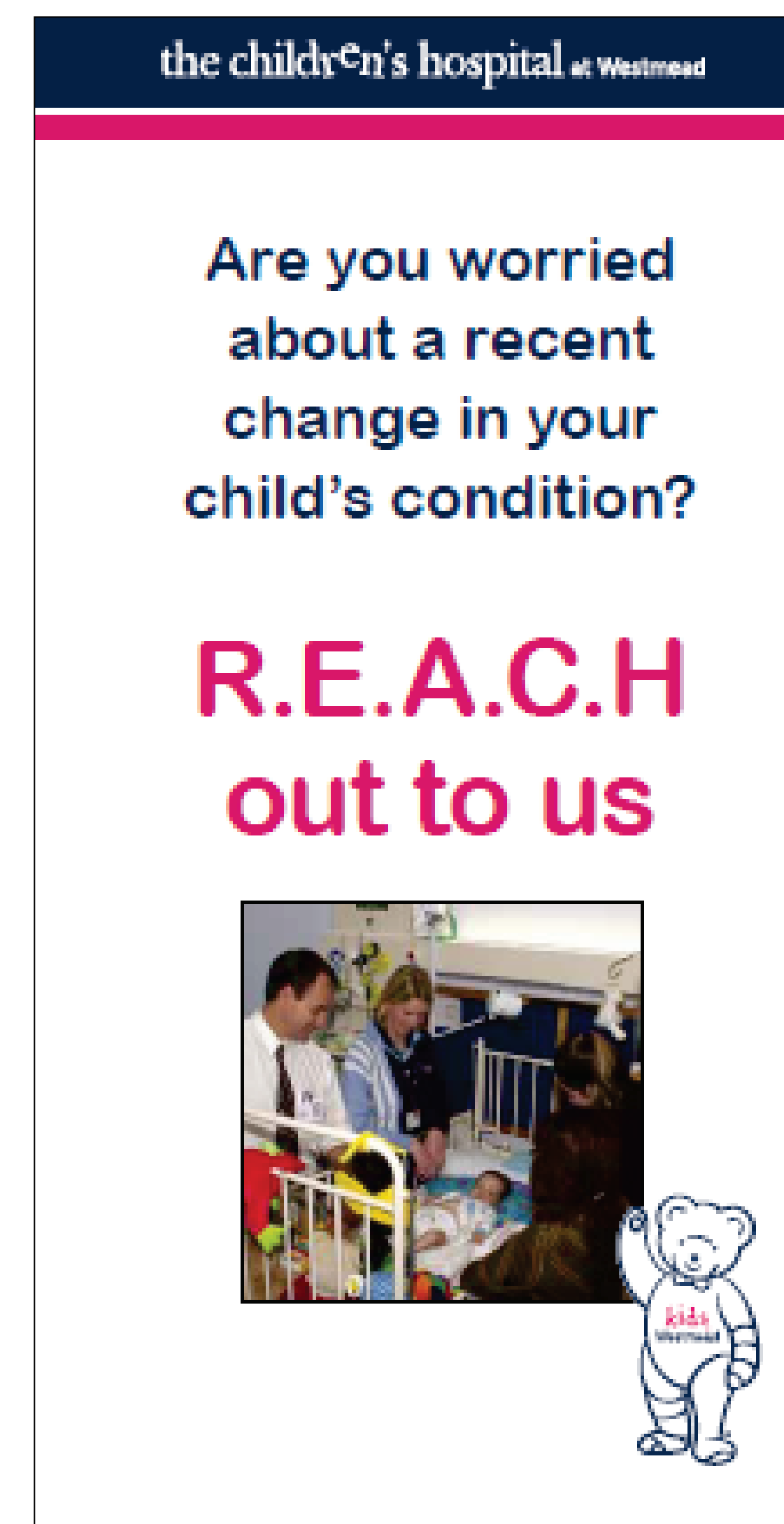
On ten of these occasions, the patients have required clinical intervention, consistent with international experience that inappropriate calls from patients/families is very low.

Patient/family activated calls (including interventions, outcomes etc.) are documented in the patient's electronic medical record (Powerchart) and reviewed monthly by the CHW Clinical Emergency Response Systems (CERS) Committee.

Conclusion

The R.E.A.C.H program is easily transferable across a wide variety of health care settings and supports acute health care facilities in achieving criterion 9.1 of the National Safety and Quality Health Service Standards.

As we are the first paediatric facility to implement a formalised process where patients and families are encouraged to escalate care, we will continue to work with the CEC to share our findings and successes with other Local Health Districts.



Information brochure for families

Acknowledgements

- REACH is an initiative of the Clinical Excellence Commission's Partnering With Patients Program