

April 10, 2014

Group purchasing initiatives deliver quality and savings for patients and families

With a mandate to standardize products and services, 3sHealth continues to negotiate national and provincial contracts to secure cost savings for the Saskatchewan healthcare system. Currently, 3sHealth in partnership with the Regional Health Authorities and Saskatchewan Cancer Agency (SCA) is working on new contracts for a number of products and service categories, including products used by cardiac services.

In the fall of 2013, 3sHealth developed competitive Request for Proposals (RFPs) for cardiac supplies, including pace makers, implantable cardioverter defibrillators and catheterization lab supplies. The competitive process for these new contracts is well underway, and 3sHealth is currently in the proposal evaluation stage. Physician, clinician, and health region materials management engagement in these processes has been a key to the success in getting to this stage. Timelines for getting these new contracts in place are on target, with a staggered start commencing with Saskatoon Health Region in 2014 and implementation at Regina Qu'Appelle Health Region in 2015.

To reduce immediate costs, 3sHealth worked with vendors to establish price harmonization for existing cardiac services, either by offering rebates based on volume purchased or by decreased pricing... the result is an impressive \$1.5M in savings.

In the coming weeks, planning for additional cardiac services such as electrophysiology lab capital and consumable supplies, as well as heart valves and rings, will get underway.

Group purchasing in Saskatchewan's health sector means the entire province commits to the contract, making our healthcare system unique to other Canadian provinces where group contract participation is optional. Products or services moved to national, provincial or multi-provincial group contracts are prioritized based on existing contract expiry dates, anticipated savings potential and the items identified as priorities by the health sector. Products and suppliers are evaluated on quality, service and cost. All stakeholders, including administrators, clinicians and patient advisors participate in the evaluation process.

spotlight

Benefits of group purchasing and standard products and services:

- A consistent experience for patients no matter where they receive treatment
- Significant discounts as a result of purchasing large quantities
- Standard processes for using and maintaining products
- Less training requirements for staff moving between facilities and regions
- Product selection based on careful evaluation and clinical trials
- Savings in time and money can be reinvested into direct patient care

Health Shared Services Saskatchewan (3sHealth) provides province-wide shared services to support a high performing, sustainable, patient and family-centred provincial health system. Together with the health regions, the Saskatchewan Cancer Agency (SCA) and the Ministry of Health, 3sHealth is focused on implementing shared services within the health sector to develop consistency in products, services and processes that result in quality improvements as well as leverage cost savings that can be redirected to patient care.