A QUALITY IMPROVEMENT INITIATIVE

Empowering Nursing Staff to Reduce Medication Costs at a Skilled Nursing Facility

**AIM**
To achieve a 20% reduction in drug costs over a 6 months period.

**METHOD**
Formal quality improvement methodology was employed. Monthly data measures (e.g. medication costs) using run charts were used to track outcomes and empower direct-care staff. Successful inter-professional collaboration was achieved through team meetings and care conferences.

Change ideas included: reducing medication waste, switching to lower cost (equally effective) medications and deprescribing.

**RESULT**
This initiative successfully reduced drug costs by 20% (*Figure 2*).

**CONCLUSION**
Resident health outcomes tracked over the evaluation period confirmed that none of the medication changes had a negative impact on resident health outcomes.

The key to the success was the development of effective inter-professional collaboration using a patient-centered approach.

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**Cost reduction in health care** is traditionally the unpleasant undertaking of upper management and is often equated to reduced services and job loss at the front line. In 2018, Louis Brier Home & Hospital, a 215 bed residential care facility faced the challenge of cost-cutting due to monthly medication expenditures exceeding provincial funding (*Figure 1*). As a solution, a cost containment project was undertaken by the home, utilizing direct-care staff to achieve the desired financial target.