Transparency in revenue collection strengthens capacity to deliver better care: lessons from Bashanet hospital

Bashanet hospital asked PharmAccess to support the introduction of an affordable, efficient and transparent system for collection of cash revenues. This success story describes how a mobile phone based digital cashless system is used to bring in transparency into the revenue collection system and as result contributed to strengthening the capacity of Bashanet hospital to deliver better care.

Bashanet is a Voluntary Agency Hospital owned by the Roman Catholic Diocese of Mbulu and is located in Babati Districts Tanzania, 56 km away from Babati town Centre. The facility was established in 1998 as a health center and got promoted into a hospital by September 2011. The hospital serves a catchment population of about 300,000 and is currently enrolled into the business of quality project, a project whose objectives are to improve quality and business performance of the hospital. The facility is a SafeCare level 1 and has received three SafeCare monitoring visits and support from the CSSC. Their current quality improvement plan progress is 62 percent. The hospital is contracted as a service provider to insured members of two schemes: the improved Community health fund (iCHF) and National Health Insurance Fund (NHIF).

Of recent, the hospital was facing cash flow problems resulting into service challenges as staff salaries and medical supplies contractors were not being paid in time. As a result, this lead to low staff morale and unavailability of essential supplies; thus affecting the quality of service. To help address these challenges, the hospital management requested PharmAccess to support them on their basis of experience working with other facilities to address similar problems. PharmAccess proposed to introduce a digital solution that improves efficiency in collection and would ensure all cash revenues are properly collected, plugs potential loopholes and inform the management team about collections on a real time basis.

Innovation

PharmAccess in collaboration with Selcom, a Tanzanian based mobile money aggregator, developed M-Afya Card: a ring-fenced card that allows users to digitally save money. These savings can only be used to pay for health services. In addition, a mobile money transfer system was setup at the hospital where clients would digitally transfer money into their mobile money accounts, and thereafter pay for hospital care bills. It was made compulsory that any uninsured clients seeking services at the hospital are required to pay their bills only through mobile payment or M-Afya and not in cash or any other modality. The digital money transfers are deposited into the hospitals bank account on a real time basis. A notification is simultaneously sent to an authorized member of the management team and/or of the governing board, thus bringing about a measure of transparency in revenue collection. The system does not allow hospital staff to handle cash, and allows traceability on number of transactions made thus has a measure checks and comparisons.

Although there were some teething problems, there have been a monthly increase of 21% in cash revenue collection during the first three months of implementation. As a result of this increase, the hospital is able to buy medicine, laboratory equipment and pay their bills on time. This contributes to improvement of quality services to their clients. In addition to

revenue increase, transparency on revenue collection has improved and has been key in supporting informed decision on expenditure prioritization.

Facility Management Perception and Acceptance

Facility Doctor in charge: *''This is a very good system, it gives me the total collection of the day even if I'm not at the facility, also I get report at any time anywhere, and now I see an increase of revenue. I Love this system, thank you so much PharmAccess''.*

Facility Accountant: *"This is an awesome system, it helps me a lot with reports, and I'm not going to the bank to deposit money. The system helps me to do it, now I am at peace, I do not have the risk of carrying cash to the bank, as you know we in the remote areas and Banks are very far, so the system helps me to save time. This system is very useful and easy to use, thanks so much for this system."*

Facility cashiers: *" This system is easy to use, at the beginning we were scared of doing a mistake but the system is user friendly and it' saves time, I don't handle cash anymore, even the customers now are happy."*

Patients also like the system, Mr. *Kalishi Mao says: ''The first time it felt like a disturbance but now I love to put money there, I can use it with my family, and if I don't fall sick my money stays in my card. It's very simple to use the card, I tap and enter my password I am done".* Ms. Lucia Hipolili says: *'' The card is very easy to use, I don't take time to use it only two minutes and the payments is done. Now I can start saving money for my insurance premium because I do not have the improved CHF.*

Going forward

Because of the observed successes, CSSC has approached us to work with three rural, hard to reach hospitals: Gonja Hospital (Same District –Kilimanjaro) and Endulen Hospital and Wapo Hospital (Ngorongoro District Arusha). For these hospitals more mobile payment centers will be added at the laboratory, pharmacy and the OPD as to enable them to monitor revenue streams e.g. from Pharmacy thus facilitate better monitoring and planning.