BritishRedCross

Flu Friends – A possible alternative

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Flu Friends

Who can be a flu friend?

Who can be a Flu Friend?

- You, Me, Most People
- Someone who will collect anti-virals for a symptomatic individual
- Someone who will provide other practical and psychosocial support e.g. shopping, telephone checks
- Part of the local community's resilience mechanisms

Enabling others to help

> The public!

Why are we talking about them?

- Most people will know who their flu friend is (family, friends)
- But not everyone will have a flu friend
- Older people who have no surviving relatives or whose family/friends live far away, migrants or new comers to a community, people who are geographically isolated etc., may not have a flu friend.

An Alternative to…..

- People going to GPs/pharmacists – potentially spreading the virus and also putting additional demand on the system
- People not getting the help they need when they need it and possibly becoming more seriously ill
- A centrally controlled delivery system
- PCT/SS needing to use scarce resources to organise deliveries and provide support

Why the Voluntary Sector?

- Commitment to help the most vulnerable
- Has already got a large volunteer workforce
- Linked into local communities, can identify the most vulnerable and recruit volunteers
- May already be working in partnership with statutory sector

How Does It Work?

- Arrangements will vary between local PCTs and the voluntary organisation they are working with
- British Red Cross (BRC) is only one player; many other voluntary organisations also involved. Models will vary
- BRC's model is that we are undertaking the work on behalf of statutory partners and targeting the most vulnerable who do not have a friend nor supporter who can easily help them

How Does It Work?

- Referral has to come through PCT. May be linked to other services e.g. in North Wales BRC providing surge capacity for flu assessment line
- Procedures and process map set up and agreed
- Will provide a 24/7 service but in most cases would expect to deliver the antivirals during the working day

How Does It Work?

- Primarily provided by volunteers all of whom will be CRB checked and follow BRC policies
- Patient ID checked when anti virals handed over
- Telephone support provided; some additional tasks may be taken
- Will ring again in a couple of days time to check how the patient is doing
- Who benefits. Some case stories……

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Issues

- Identification of vulnerability
- Efficient management of resources
- Having the right systems in place
- Security of personnel and drugs
- Cost recovery
- Building the relationship for the future
- Lets not mystify the role – we can all do it!

Questions & Comments