



Home Oxygen Service festive period performance

Our Christmas planning proved successful once again in 2009 ensuring that our patients received the highest level of service during this seasonally hectic period for the Home Oxygen Service. In the busiest week leading up to 25th December, despite increases of 371% in holiday orders, 70% in emergency orders, 50% in hospital discharge and 20% call volume against the normal daily averages, our performance against KPIs was maintained at 100%.

But it didn't stop there. The recent adverse weather conditions have affected all our regions, challenging us to maintain service levels whilst keeping safety as top priority. We doubled out-of-hours cover, moved extra engineers into trouble-spot areas to keep deliveries moving, and bolstered our B10 back-up cylinder stocks in all regions to prepare for prolonged power outages. We kept patients awaiting deliveries updated with expected delivery times as the road conditions became apparent. And when the roads became too bad, many engineers took to delivering by foot – trudging through snow for miles to deliver urgent supplies. We even heard of some sledges being used! We're really proud of our team for going the extra mile – once again.

Welcome

Welcome to the second edition of the Air Products Newsletter for healthcare professionals. In this update we look back to the months in the run up to Christmas and provide you with exciting news about the next few months to come!

Everyone at Air Products wishes you a Happy New Year and we hope that you enjoy this latest newsletter.

Milestone call received

On November 19, our Homecare Helpline received its 2,000,000th call since the Home Oxygen Service started in early 2006.

It was a real cause for celebration for the call centre team who handle approximately 10,000 calls per week, operate 24 hours per day and make approximately 1500 outbound calls per week.

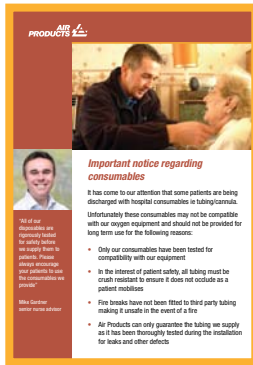
Ensuring calls are answered promptly and effectively takes good planning, training and commitment by our helpline team so they were deservedly celebrating this milestone.

“This is a tremendous achievement and one that we couldn't have reached without a lot of hard work and dedication from many individuals”, says Aaron Baxter, operations manager, Healthcare UK and Ireland.

Typically we receive around 2000 calls per day during the week, but on the Monday before Christmas we received an all-time high of 3334 calls in one day. The team coped brilliantly with this challenging 50% increase in demand, whilst maintaining our excellent performance against KPIs. It came down to good Christmas resource planning and being able to call upon the overspill contingency of our call-centre trained admin team, who themselves at the same time were coping with seasonal high numbers of HOOFs from increased hospital discharges.



from left: Adam Sullivan, Simon Hibbert, Sian Davies, Mike Brown, Carly Beckton, Ross Manley, John Hirons



Careful with oxygen consumables!

It has come to our attention that some patients discharged from hospital are being provided with oxygen tubing and cannula from the hospital. Whilst this may seem helpful to the patient, this poses a potential safety risk. The hospital-provided consumables might not be compatible with our home oxygen equipment and flow-rates could be affected. In addition, these consumables may not have safety features such as anti-crush tubing.

We have created an information leaflet about this issue which is available from our website www.airproducts.co.uk/homecare or from your regional nurse advisor.

Please remember that patients can order replacement consumables free of charge from our Homecare Helpline on 0800 373580.

Please forward this information to your local hospital discharge coordination team.

Performance survey

A qualitative survey was conducted in the later months of 2009 to gather feedback from patients about the home oxygen service and explore ideas for improvements to the service. A randomly-selected sample of patients from all regions gave their feedback during face-to-face or telephone interviews conducted by an independent research agency. The survey, commissioned by the Department of Health, followed the 2008 national survey, and was designed to gather more detailed feedback than the first quantitative survey.

Air Products worked with the DOH and NHS staff, and other service providers, on the HOS Quality Forum to ensure that the completion and distribution of the 2009 patient survey was kept to a tight schedule. All survey information was posted to the selected patients in mid-November.

We're really proud that the feedback on Air Products received so far has been very positive; not just in terms of the level of service we provide but also the manner in which our team work. Our engineers have been described as 'fantastic' and the call-centre are 'just like the delivery drivers but on the phone'. This positive feedback is a testimony to the professionalism and dedication of the entire healthcare team. We now eagerly await the full results report due within the next few months.

HOOF update

Following our reference to the new HOOF in our previous newsletter, we have to report that 20% of prescribers are still placing orders on the obsolete HOOF. As of the end of October 2009, home oxygen orders should be placed on the new HOOF form.

In the interests of patient safety, we are not rejecting orders received on the obsolete form. However, we remind prescribers about the new HOOF on all order acknowledgement faxes.

We would encourage you to ensure awareness of the new HOOF amongst prescribers at your Trust. To facilitate this task we issue a report monthly to regional HOS leads which details the prescribers who have placed orders on the wrong HOOF document.

If you have not done so, or if you're unclear whether you're using the new form, please download the new HOOF by visiting the PCC website www.pcc.nhs.uk

When you use the new form, don't forget there are no changes to the consent process, be aware that the consent box now appears above section one on the HOOF and is easily missed. This box must be ticked as patient consent is mandatory and orders will be rejected otherwise. This also applies to all holiday orders for new and existing oxygen patients.



Patient Safety Awards

We're thrilled to learn that our ever-popular Sunshine magazine has been shortlisted for the Nursing Times & Health Service Journal, Patient Safety Awards 2010. These awards recognise those who excel in patient safety.

It was cheers all around when our team received the call from the sponsors of the awards to say that our 'Sunshine' magazine had been selected from 400 entries and made it to the final six in the 'Communicating Patient Safety' category. We introduced Sunshine magazine in 2008 to communicate key safety messages to patients alongside fun things like recipes, word search competitions, jokes, etc.

"Sunshine is going from strength to strength and regularly receives positive comments from patients, which is great. I feel proud to be able to say that, even though we are in a low-cost environment, Air Products considers communicating to its patients as a priority", says Jay Shingler, communications manager, healthcare.

The final winners will be announced at a gala dinner on February 5th. We're keeping our fingers crossed.

The pictured Safety Special was sent with the winter Sunshine magazine. You can download it from www.airproducts.co.uk/homecare

Electricity statements

After our first edition of this healthcare newsletter, many of you said that you would like to know more about how we calculate electricity refunds to our concentrator patients. The electricity refund is to reimburse patients for the electricity that their concentrator uses. We do not refund any standing charges.

We have a dedicated electricity team that monitors all electricity provider tariffs at least monthly (or as advised directly by electricity providers). Any changes are then reflected in our reimbursement rates. We are required by the Department of Health to refund a non-negotiable standard rate, which equates to Tier 2 rates on patient bills. Our refund rates are generally higher than the special rates that many patients have signed up to with their energy suppliers.

Patients receive refund on a quarterly basis; alternating between a payment based on an actual reading taken by our engineer of their concentrator meter, and an estimated payment based on their historic usage. Any under or over-payment in the estimated payment is adjusted in the next quarter's actual-reading payment. All patients with concentrators receive a quarterly statement which explains their electricity refund amount.

To calculate the reimbursement we multiply the following:

$$\begin{aligned}
 & \text{The number of hours used by concentrator (estimated or actual)} \\
 & \quad \times \\
 & \text{The verified power factor of the concentrator} \\
 & \quad \times \\
 & \text{The electricity supplier's standard rate for the region}
 \end{aligned}$$

Patient statement explanation

Please find attached a cheque to cover the cost of electricity used by your oxygen concentrator. The table below shows the period covered by this payment and the number of hours for which the machine has run which we established from a reading taken by our oxygen engineer during their recent visit.

Concentrator No	Date From	Old Reading	Date To	New Reading	Hours Run
837851	16/01/2009	18693	17/07/2009	21972	3279
				TOTAL	3279

To calculate your actual payment due, we subtract any advanced estimated payments we have already sent. The amount due to you is displayed in the payment due box.

3	Calculated Refund	£114.93
	Minus Previous Estimated payments	-£71.95
4	Adjustment	£0.00
	Payment Due	£42.98
5	Balance Carried Forward	£0.00

1 & 2) These are the dates when your engineer took an actual service reading and this is the period for which we are refunding. If you have received an estimate payment between these dates this will be adjusted as shown in section 3.

3) This shows any previous estimated or over payment made and will be taken off your calculated refund.

4) This is the amount of money we are paying to you.

5) If however you have used less than we have paid in our estimate payment, then the balance carried forward will show a minus figure to reflect this, it does not mean that we are requesting a payment from you. We will take it off your future payment amount.

Air Products shows commitment to patients' therapy adherence

The European Respiratory Society Congress (ERS) in November last year, saw the launch of a new system by Air Products, which will help to improve patients' adherence to their CPAP therapy.

APMedicalDirect® Adherence Management System (APMDAMS) is a new online system that provides detailed information on sleep patients' compliance to their prescribed therapy, therapy history and the service interventions taken by Air Products via a clear, easy-to-use interface. It is designed to help clinicians monitor patient progress from their desktop; deliver alerts on potential risk factors and trends; and create detailed, tailored reports.

The system has been running in France for several months with 12,000 patients already uploaded and has been very well received by the sleep clinics using it.

Bibi Señor, European medical marketing manager, who has developed the system commented, "We have long recognised the challenge of achieving the best possible outcome of CPAP therapy for the patient and the funding health service. Our adherence programme with the APMDAMS web portal enables us to truly work in partnership with the sleep clinics to help them identify patients at risk at non-adherence and quickly intervene with a range of support activities, and importantly monitor the effects of those interventions."

APMDAMS will be launched in the UK in Spring. If you'd like to find out more about the system and how it could help you manage and monitor your CPAP users, please contact your nurse advisor.

Sarah Williams, oxygen nurse from Leicester County and Rutland Community Services, visited our stand at ERS and entered our prize draw. She was the lucky winner of a Wii games console.

We come bearing gifts.....



Winter Sunshine, that'd be nice!

The latest edition of our quarterly patient magazine 'Sunshine' was sent to all of our 55,000 oxygen users before the end of last year.

This edition covered topics relevant to the winter season such as advice regarding holiday arrangements over the festive period and safety in the winter season, including preparing for power cuts and safe use of candles. If you have not had the chance to see this issue, you can download it from our website www.airproducts.co.uk/homecare Go to the homepage and follow the instructions in the 'download' box.



The next edition will be issued to patient shortly and will be available to download from our website by the end of January 2010.

Our team wanted to help make Christmas that bit more special for the residents of Hope House hospice in Oswestry - a home for terminally-ill children. In the run up to Christmas, various activities including 'cake days' (cakes were generously home-baked and sold), raised enough money to buy the hospice several Xbox 360 games for the home's teenage residents and over 40 chocolate selection boxes.

Diane Aplin, fundraising co-ordinator at Hope House hospice, thanks the team for their effort: "The children will think I'm Father Christmas when I arrive back at the hospice armed with all these wonderful gifts!"

"At Christmas time especially it's important that our thoughts are with those who are in some way less fortunate than ourselves. This is just one of our ongoing community related projects we run throughout the year and I'm delighted to be part of group who support such worthwhile causes" said Adam Sullivan, general manager, healthcare UK and Ireland.

Data Protection at Air Products

The growth in the number of data protection breaches that you hear about in the media is increasing at the same time as awareness of the importance of protecting personal information is also on the rise.

Air Products Healthcare takes Data Protection very seriously and all employees endeavour to ensure they comply with all important principles associated with this extremely important practice within the workplace.

We have a dedicated Data Protection Manager whose responsibilities are to ensure that all employees working with patient data understand the importance of safeguarding sensitive information.

There are regular awareness sessions among both office and field employees which maintains the critical messages, ranging from our legal requirements under Data Privacy law to protecting our own and our family's data.

Strengthening the data protection culture within our business means that we continually looking to minimise the risks of our sensitive data being compromised and our Corporate training syllabus is designed so that every employee within Healthcare receives mandatory training, with refresher courses, every twelve months.

All our activities in processing patient data are controlled by specific work instructions and our continuous improvement programmes ensure we are always aware of changes that could develop our risk handling.

We aim to equip our employees with a directory of tools and resources which are the best source for the how, what and where of keeping information safe and secure.



Exhibitions attendance

Congratulations to Dr Simon Hart from Castle Hill hospital, Hull, who was the lucky winner of our charity prize draw at BTS in December. Air Products was delighted to donate £100 to Dr Hart's chosen charity, the medical humanitarian organisation Médecins Sans Frontières, on his behalf. A very worthy cause. For your chance to win £100 donation from us to your chosen charity, or to discover more about the services we offer, you can find us at the following meetings in early 2010:

ARTP (Association for Respiratory Technology and Physiology) annual conference
28 - 30 January 2010
Park Inn Hotel, Heathrow

MTS (Midlands Thoracic Society)
19 March 2010
Barcelo Hinckley Island Hotel, Hinckley

Summer BTS (British Thoracic Society)
24 - 25 June 2010
University Place, The University of Manchester, Manchester

Oxygen on the move!

In our previous newsletter, we were remiss to not mention the efforts of Chris Wrench and Ruth Darwin (respiratory nurses from the Northern General Hospital, Sheffield), who had lobbied Sheffield's public transport companies for many years about permission to use portable oxygen on board. Apologies Chris and Ruth.



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www.airproducts.co.uk/homecare