

BRIGHT LIGHTS AWARDS



2015

Transforming patient' and caregivers' experience and health Mount Sinai Hospital Academic Family Health Team

The Brown-Bag Medication Check-Up Program



Healthcare in Ontario today is placing its focus squarely on patients by considering what's important to them and adjusting care to meet those needs. As one way of responding to patient needs, the Mount Sinai Academic Family Health Team took up the challenge of improving medication safety, especially for ambulatory patients with care-sensitive conditions. Their Brown Bag Medication Check-Up Program was conceived in answer to a recommendation made in the February 2015 edition of the Ontario Primary Care Medication Reconciliation Guide.

The Mount Sinai Brown Bag Medication Check-Up Program is based on the idea that knowledge is power. It is a patient-centred initiative designed to improve medication safety. A brown-bag check-up requires patients to gather all of their current medications and over-the-counter products into a "brown-bag" and show them to their doctor or pharmacist so he/she can look for any potential problems. Like other medication check-up programs, it aims to improve a patient's ability to self-manage his or her medications and to learn how to be an advocate for personal safe medication use.

With the help of the clinic pharmacist patients learn how to ensure that they are taking the proper medications as prescribed at the proper times and in the correct dosages, with an additional emphasis on learning to read packaging properly. Since patients often find that their dosages and medication times change as their health changes, it is easy to become confused.

Mount Sinai's program stands out due to the variety of creative promotional strategies it uses to attract diverse patients to the program. By increasing promotion inside the clinic, using social media outlets such as Facebook and enhancing provider education about the importance of the program, the team is on track to improve their patients' abilities to self-manage their medications and to be their own advocates for safe and effective medication use.

The Mount Sinai Academic Family Health Team is eager to share its program with other primary care teams in order to build capacity across Ontario to manage safe and effective medication use. It is designed to be easily replicated: there are core elements that can be tailored to meet the needs of other primary care teams.

The team plans to disseminate the program's tools and resources to other relevant audiences, such as the Canadian Pharmacists Association and other primary care teams. If all goes well, patients across Ontario will soon be brown bagging it.