

Abstract Jeremy Martin:

The Symphony Programme – an example from the UK of integrated working between primary and secondary care

The English healthcare system, in common with many healthcare systems, is under increasing pressure from rising demand and funding that is not keeping pace. The NHS in England is undertaking a major drive to integrate health and social care in order to reduce the demand on all types of hospital activity, particularly emergency admissions and outpatient care. At the same time the primary care system in England is struggling, with low morale and many GPs leaving or retiring due to the pressures of work. This lecture will discuss how one health community in England has been tackling these problems through its work on the Symphony Programme. The Symphony Programme is one of the “Vanguard” projects in the UK which are being funded by the government to explore new ways of integrating services.

The lecture will describe how primary care is being supported to take on a population health approach with the introduction of health coaches into practices, how complex patients are supported by a dedicated team, how community based services are being redesigned around primary care, and how ambulatory and outpatient care in the hospital are being reformed. All of this is reducing demand on the hospital and the lecture will describe the results to date. The session will involve group discussion comparing the UK and Austrian healthcare systems, the issues they face, and how similar approaches could be applied in Austria.