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## Pharmacy News Article

### 9/6/17 - GP phone service cuts hospital visits

Nearly 2,000 patients were spared an avoidable visit to hospital by GPs who used a new service to call specialists for immediate advice.

Doctors in the West Midlands turned to Consultant Connect, which allows them to speak to a specialist, often with the patient still in the room and can save them waiting days for a response or being sent to hospital for further checks.

Around 1,850 patients were spared going to Sandwell Hospital as well as Heartland and Good Hope Hospitals in Birmingham, experts said.

The service covers cardiology, diabetes and endocrinology, gastroenterology, gynaecology, general surgery, haematology, paediatrics, renal medicine, urology and respiratory medicine.

Since the phone line launched, GPs from 100 surgeries across Walsall, Sandwell and Solihull have made nearly 2,500 calls to specialists to get expert advice on the best care for their patients.

Consultant Connect estimates that West Midlands GPs and consultants have saved the NHS 570,000 by ensuring patients get the right treatment from the beginning. The company works with the NHS by providing a phone line for doctors to use if they are unsure on the best way forward for a patient.

When local GPs used Consultant Connect, around 50 per cent of their patients avoided the inconvenience of a trip to hospital.

Chief executive Jonathan Patrick said: "It's fantastic that the telephone advice and guidance service Consultant Connect is having such a positive impact on the lives of patients, GPs and consultants in Birmingham. "We're delighted to help GPs provide the best possible care for their patients while enabling them to build better relationships with specialists."

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