

HOME-HOSPITAL CARE, A WIN-WIN FOR PATIENTS, PROVIDERS, FAMILY MEMBERS AND THE HEALTH SYSTEM



An 86-year-old woman who suffers from congestive heart failure was rushed to a major urban hospital with difficulty breathing, caused by fluid in her lungs and legs. Once she was treated and monitored for a couple of days, she was sent home to her apartment where she lived alone. A Home-Hospital Assistance program was set up to take care of her medical needs. Personnel from the hospital agency visited her home twice daily where they engaged in routine care such as blood draws and weight checks. A patch on her chest monitored her vital signs that were transmitted to someone at the hospital who kept a close watch 24/7.

(Hospital -Level Care at Home Saves Money. The Government Should Allow More of it. The Boston Globe, July 26, 2023, Editorial Opinion)

The individual's care was paid for under a program passed by Congress in 2020 authorizing The Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services, CMS, to reimburse for these services. CMS estimates that 8,090 home health care agencies in the United States now provide this type of care for more than 2.4 million elderly and disabled people annually. To be eligible for Medicare reimbursement of home health care, services must be deemed medically necessary by a physician and provided to a home-bound patient. CMS has made a strategic commitment to drive innovation that promotes comprehensive, person-centered care for older adults and people with disabilities. There are now over 300 hospitals in 37 states across the nation offering such Hospital to Home care, saving lives and money and enabling people to be cared for in the comfort of their own surroundings. Services in this program include, by way of example, the following:

- Meals
- Administration and Management of medication
- Imaging services
- Blood draws
- Physical therapy
- Wound care
- Social work
- Diagnostic studies such as electrocardiograms, echocardiograms, and x-rays
- Treatments such as oxygen therapy, intravenous fluids, intravenous antibiotics, and other medicines
- Services such as respiratory therapy, pharmacy services, and skilled nursing services

When treated at home patients report having fewer issues, less risk of complications and experience greater comfort in terms of pain, anxiety and getting sufficient sleep. Patients go home with specific treatments plans tailored to their individual needs,

always with the knowledge that qualified medical personnel are watching over them. Home health care services can include: nursing care; physical, occupational, and speech-language therapy; and medical social services, all with the goal of helping individuals to improve function and live with greater independence; This structure promotes a patient's optimal level of well-being; and assists the patient to avoid re-hospitalization. Home Health care outcome measures mandated by CMS ensure that quality of care is maintained.

Patient Safety and Quality: An Evidence-Based Handbook for Nurses. *Patient Safety and Quality in Home Health Care Chapter 13*

Carol Hall Ellenbecker; Linda Samia; Margaret J. Cushman; Kristine Als
National Library of Medicine

There are many benefits to a person living in their familiar comfortable setting, surrounded by their own belongings and memories when recuperating from a hospital stay or dealing with a chronic condition that has led to an emergency visit. They can follow their own daily routine as much as possible, feel independent, and carry on with their life while getting the help that they need. Additionally, staying at home enables individuals to remain close to family, friends, and neighbors. New innovative devices that foster remote patient monitoring also ensures that oversight of a person's care is ongoing and constant. Thus, Home- Hospital Care has all the attributes of a Win-Win!

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