

More Hospitals Should See Value of Non-Medical Homecare, Says Augusto Beato

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Hospitals and health systems facing financial penalties for frequent readmissions should tap non-medical care home care, according to Augusto Beato, CEO at Portland SEO.

Beato, through Portland SEO, has been promoting the value of non-medical care and hopes that more health systems and hospitals integrate it into their continuum of service.

Data shows that non-medical care home care has increasingly prevented relapses that require rehospitalization, recently by as much as 25 percent.

Among the data is a review of heart failure patients that was published in the Annals of Internal Medicine, which shows home nursing visits were able to reduce hospital readmissions and death by six months.

In another study published in the Health Services Research, it was shown that combining home health

services and doctor visits pulled down the probability of readmission by eigjht percent.

The Journal of Post-Acute and Long-Term Care Medicine also published similar data, this time showing that patients discharged from skilled nursing facilities to home care had a reduced hazard of hospital readmission.

Data from the health insurance company Paramount also showed that patients who availed of home health services within two weeks of discharge from an acute care facility are about 25 percent more likely to get readmitted within 30 days.

The Medicare's Hospital Readmission Reduction Program has provided stiff financial penalties to hospitals and other health systems for readmission on some conditions such as pneumonia, heart attack, and coronary artery bypass graft.

Non-medical home care staff can encourage patients to do prescribed activities like light exercise and deep breathing. They are able to detect changes in clients' conditions, which they can report it at the earliest time so it could be addressed before readmission becomes necessary.

Among these conditions are foot and ankle swelling, which is indicative of possible congestive heart failure.

There are also assistive technologies that promote wellness, such as motion and contact sensors to get real-time reporting of a patient's Activities of Daily Living. The systems give accurate insights into a patient's medication compliance, sleeping and eating patterns, bathroom use, as well as other conditions such as wandering.

Beato noted that since personal care attendants work closely with clients, such as helping them with a shower, they are able to spot something with the patient not normally seen by others and could easily report it to the nurse.

According to ProMedica's Steve Cavanaugh, if home needs are not met, clients suffer setbacks that could lead them to hospital readmission or another care setting.

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