



Reducing Unplanned Hospital Readmissions:

An Opportunity for the Respiratory Therapist

Introduction

Beginning Oct. 1, 2014 (start of fiscal year 2015), the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services will begin penalizing institutions that fail to curb excessive hospital readmissions for patients with the principle diagnosis of COPD. Depending on severity, these penalties could be as much as 1% of the total reimbursement for all CMS patients in year one, and will escalate in severity in years two and three. As a result, respiratory therapy departments are prominently positioned to add value to their organizations by minimizing unplanned hospital readmissions of the COPD patient.

To provide insight on how Respiratory Care departments can help, the American Association for Respiratory Care (AARC) has produced a 60-minute video detailing step-by-step instructions from national experts on what it takes to keep the COPD patient out of the hospital. This video has been made available at **NO COST** to respiratory therapists, hospital administrators and other individuals responsible for managing hospital readmissions.

The video features **Dr. Stephen Jencks**, a former United States Assistant Surgeon General, healthcare consultant and senior author of the authoritative New England Journal of Medicine article on hospital readmissions titled; “Rehospitalizations among Patients in the Medicare Fee-for-Service Program” (N ENGL J Med 360;14, April 2009). Also presenting is **Becky Anderson RRT**, a registered respiratory therapist and manager of the Disease Management Section of the Respiratory Care Services Department at Sanford Medical Center in Fargo, ND.

Video Content

- Initiatives to mitigate unplanned readmissions for all patient populations
- Coleman’s 4 Pillars for successful hospital discharge
- Interdisciplinary team building
- Use of care plans and checklists
- A “How To” guide to build a successful COPD Disease Management Program

Outcomes Achieved at Sanford Health:

- 10% reduction in COPD readmissions
- \$200,000 gain in net revenue per year on all COPD admissions
- Reimbursement change from (**\$250**) per COPD admission to + \$1,750
- ~ 40% reduction in ED/hospital admissions by using Pulmonary Rehabilitation

COPD Readmission Statistics

- An estimated 24 million Americans have COPD¹
- Only 15 million Americans have been diagnosed with COPD¹
- 7.1% of discharged COPD patients are readmitted within 30 days²
- 17.3% of discharged patients with a co-morbidity of COPD are readmitted within 30 days²
- Average cost for a “routine” COPD admission: \$7,100²
- Average cost for a COPD readmission: \$8,400²

Conclusion

All Respiratory Care departments are able to easily achieve these outcomes with proper planning, strong leadership, and a commitment to evidence-based practice and disease management education. The American Association for Respiratory Care challenges all respiratory departments to take an active role in addressing hospital readmissions, adding value to their organizations, and in providing better care to their patients. We hope this video provides you with the insight and confidence that respiratory therapists are skilled and competent to serve in this capacity.

Thank you for downloading this executive summary. In the event you are unable to commit 60-minutes to watch this video, we hope you delegate someone of influence to watch it in your place.

References

1. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Chronic obstructive pulmonary disease among adults—United States, 2011. MMWR. 2012;61(46):938-943.
2. Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality. Readmissions for Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease, 2008. <http://www.hcup-us.ahrq.gov/reports/statbriefs/sb121.pdf>. Accessed on 6/2/2014.