

10) Homeward Bound

Signature Healthcare

Rachel Labas, Media & PR Supervisor; rlabas@signature-healthcare.org

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Approximately 28% of the hospital's patients with Congestive Heart Failure (CHF) are readmitted to the hospital within 30 days compared to the national average of 24.7%. Homeward Bound, a grant-initiated program administered through the CHF Team and the Hospital's School of Nursing, was specifically designed to lower the 30-day readmission rate for these high-risk patients through in-home coordinated care. This is accomplished through the use of telehealth monitoring supervised by an RN and home visits by students/faculty designed to promote patient education and screening for complications relative to their diagnoses.

Students enrolled in the Hospital School of Nursing (HSN), as part of their clinical rotation, are mentored by the CHF team to receive education on Congestive Heart Failure, including observation time in the Cardiac Catheterization Lab, and observing stress testing, echocardiograms and other heart related procedures. Under the instruction of nursing preceptors, students make home visits to patients using iPads to observe patient compliance with self-care instructions, log vital signs and medication administration. Patients are monitored for vital signs and weight with results being sent to a telehealth nurse who is part of the CHF team.

OUTCOMES ACHIEVED

- In its first year, Homeward Bound worked with 22 patients, none of whom were re-hospitalized (September 2013-2014).

LESSONS LEARNED

- The healing power of students. Nursing students bring youth, energy, and enthusiasm to their work which translates to higher levels of motivation in patients to follow their treatment regime. Nursing students are also more approachable to patients. Because students are not in a position of power, but rather a position of support, patients immediately connect with them.
- To achieve the goal of reducing the 30-day readmission rates for patients with CHF, an interdisciplinary team is required, with different perspectives and the ability to be high touch – including nursing students, hospital staff and faculty working together to monitor patient's conditions on a daily basis.
- In Homeward Bound, nursing students use the Teach Back method to educate patients about self-care and evaluate patient retention of education on a weekly basis. The teach back method is longer than traditional, brief teaching sessions and allows the nursing students to check in for lapses in recall and understanding, reinforce and tailor messages, and engage in an open dialogue with their patients over time. Education and symptom self-management interventions have been shown to decrease mortality and readmission rates in patients with CHF when delivered by trained personnel.