

# Readmissions NEWS

## Thought Leaders' Corner

### Q. What Role Can Home Health Care Play in Reducing Preventable Readmissions?

Each month, Readmissions News asks a panel of industry experts to discuss a topic of interest to the hospital community. To suggest a topic, write to [Editor@ReadmissionsNews.com](mailto:Editor@ReadmissionsNews.com).

Readmissions are a function of clinical, socio-economic and engagement risk. Members who are at high risk for multiple, clustered admissions (admissions and subsequent readmissions) typically have an undesirable disease trajectory as well as a history of engagement challenges, such as poor preventive behavior, sporadic visits to their doctor, excessive use to the ER, challenges with medication adherence, PCP switching, etc. Also, when probed (or when data on social determinants of health is available), these members have other socio-economic barriers, such as limited home care support, undesirable nutrition, poor health literacy, and so forth, which further compound and elevate their risk.

Because of this, proactive Home Health Care and Home Care are critical in reducing readmissions. Home Health Care and Home Care can deliver a variety of personalized and needed services, all geared towards reducing avoidable admissions and readmissions. Home Health services can include nutrition therapy, patient education, wound care, help with medications, while Home Care can include services such as help with activities of daily living, transportation, and companionship.

The keys to making these programs successful are twofold: 1) directing the right combination of programs to the people that need it the most, and 2) being more proactive (and less reactive) in delivering these programs.

If healthcare organizations are able to proactively identify individuals that are high risk for multiple clustered admissions, and engage these individuals in appropriate programs, they would be better able to address the clinical, engagement and social challenges of these "at risk" members, and thereby reduce the chances of an avoidable admission, the subsequent readmission, or both.



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