Home Health Must Prepare for the Coming Payment Revolution

Source: NAHC

The Patient-Driven Groupings Model (PDGM) will revolutionize the payment methodology for all Medicare Home Health Agencies in the United States. Created by the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS), PDGM is slated to debut on January 1, 2020, and home health agencies must prepare immediately for the most important change to the Medicare home health program in the 21st century. Agencies must undertake significant operational and organizational reforms in early 2019 to be prepared to successfully transition to PDGM.

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What Role Can Telehealth Play in Senior Care?

Source: Elaine K. Howley, Contributor, Health.usnews.com

In the earlier days of health care, the physician's house call was common. Many people received medical care at home, and it was just expected that doctors would travel - black bag filled with various instruments and equipment in hand - to care for people where they were.

But as medicine has evolved, fewer physicians make house calls. The amount of equipment many doctors now need to care for patients won't fit in a tote bag, and the time required by the doctor to travel to each individual patient wasn't efficient. Instead, patients travel to a clean, bright office for care.

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The Top Trends in Home Care for 2019

Source: Robert Holly, Homehealthcarenews.com
In many ways, 2018 was a coming of age for the home care industry, as it steadily became recognized as a key part of the overall continuum of care due to its ability to keep older adults safely at home and out of the hospital.

Among the biggest changes to home care in 2018: the fact that federal policymakers will allow some non-skilled in-home care services under the Medicare Advantage (MA) program starting next year.

The shift toward MA is likely to continue in 2019, along with these overarching trends below. Home Health Care News will cover trends in Medicare-certified home health care in an upcoming story.

How Technology Can Help Meet New OASIS Requirements for Pressure Ulcer Management [Sponsored]
Source: Robert Holly, Homehealthcarenews.com

Preventing and treating pressure ulcers and related injuries have long been keys to success in the post-acute care world. Thanks to federal regulation changes that kicked in at the start of 2019, they're about to become even more important as well, especially for home health providers.

The Improving Medicare Post-Acute Care Transformation Act of 2014 - signed into law under the Obama administration and more commonly referred to as the IMPACT ACT - is a bill meant to improve the quality of post-acute care services and how they're reported. That specifically includes how post-acute care providers handle pressure ulcers and related injuries, Jennifer Maxwell, co-founder and president of Maxwell Healthcare Associates said during a recent webinar.

New Edit for Hospice Medicare Claim Processing
Source: NAHC

The Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) released Change Request (CR) 11049/Transmittal 4187, Ensuring Only the Active Billing Hospice Can Submit a Revocation, which implements a new edit for hospice claims received on or after July 1, 2019. Currently, the Common Working File (CWF) will allow Notices of Revocation/Termination (NOTR - Type of Bill (TOB) 8xB) if the provider identifier on the NOTR matches the provider on the hospice election period. This occurs even if transfer notice (8xC) or a change of ownership notice (8xE) has changed the billing provider on a benefit period within that election. To prevent errors, an edit is needed in CWF to ensure that only the active billing provider can submit a revocation. There is no policy change as a result of this CR.

CMS recognized the need to change how the CWF stores and updates hospice election and benefit period information and implemented systems and operational changes in 2018, but some systems issues have persisted (See previous NAHC Report coverage here and here.) CR 11049 corrects one of these issues and CR 10967 (See NAHC Report coverage here) will implement other corrections in April 2019.
Virtual Reality Helps Hospice Workers See Life and Death Through A Patient's Eyes
Source: Kathleen Burge, NPR.org

You wait in the sterile purgatory of your oncologist's office, between your spouse and your daughter, for the doctor to give you the verdict on your latest scans.

"I'm afraid it's not good news," she says quietly, hands clasped.

Your lung cancer has grown despite your recent chemotherapy. Surgery, chemo and other treatments, she tells you, will likely only make you sicker.

"How long?" asks your spouse.

Four to six months, the doctor answers.

You may feel a surge of terror, confronted so starkly with news of your own death. You may also feel a welling-up of empathy.

And that's the point of the exercise - the reason you're wearing a heavy headset. You aren't really dying, but you are looking out into a virtual world through the eyes of Clay Crowder, a fictional 66-year-old man who has incurable lung cancer.

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CMS Posts Update to Nursing Shortage Memo
Source: NHPCO

CMS posted the "Extension of the Designation of the Current Nursing Shortage as an "Extraordinary Circumstance" per 42 CFR 418.64 Core Services" memo which extends its designation of the national nursing shortage as an extraordinary circumstance for an additional two years. CMS is eliminating the previous requirement that the hospice agency must notify CMS of its use of contacted staff during extraordinary circumstances and submit justification for such use to its State Survey Agency. This notification/justification is not required by 42 CFR 418.64. Compliance with the regulation for use of contracted staff will be reviewed as a part of the routine survey process. Read the complete CMS memo.

These States Are Most Concerned About End-of-Life Issues
Source: Robert Holly, Homehealthcarenews.com

While roughly 90% of Americans agree that discussing end-of-life care with their loved ones is important, only 27% actually follow through with conversations focused on planning, according to research from public engagement initiative The Conversation Project.

Although many have ramped up community outreach efforts, that aversion to thinking about death has been a roadblock for hospice providers in some parts of the country.

A new study by Dallas-based life insurance technology company Bestow Inc. has identified several states where end of life is on people's minds, however.
QUESTIONS? CONCERNS? COMMENTS?
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