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Research Update

Telehealth Monitoring Improves Home Health Outcomes Including Rehospitalization

In 2009, the *Journal of the American College of Cardiology* published the largest meta-analysis to date on the subject of telehealth monitoring.¹ This meta-analysis concludes that telehealth monitoring, when added to usual care, creates an additional protective effect compared to usual care alone. This meta-analysis defines usual care as a multi-disciplinary, in-person, plan of care in adherence with American College of Cardiology and American Heart Association recommendations. The addition of telehealth monitoring improves survival rates by 13%.

Last year, *The Gerontologist* published an interesting study on telehealth monitoring. This study drew our attention because of its very real world design that is highly relevant to the telehealth monitoring program at Medway Home HealthCare.² In this study, Gellis and colleagues randomized 115 home health patients (largely Medicare beneficiaries) into a usual home health care group and a home health care plus telehealth monitoring group. All patients had congestive heart failure or chronic obstructive pulmonary disease and received home health care for up to 90 days. The home health group receiving telehealth monitoring showed greater improvement in general health and social function. Over the course of 12 months (including 9 months post-home health), **the telemonitoring group was 57% less likely to visit the ER and 29% less likely to require rehospitalization.**



The telemonitoring equipment used in this study is the same equipment we use: the Honeywell HomMed device. This device automatically turns itself on at a specified time of day to prompt patients to go through a ten-minute assessment. It uses both verbal and large-text instructions to guide patients through a series of vital sign measurements and disease specific questions. As with our telehealth monitoring program, the monitoring devices in this study were integrated with an online, electronic record system that could be accessed by doctors and all other involved health practitioners and that could be used to email, fax, or print easy-to-interpret trended data.

This new study further demonstrates how telehealth monitoring can improve outcomes over usual home health. To supplement the usual nursing, aide, and therapy visits, the telemonitoring system electronically sends daily assessment data to a Medway nurse. It color codes and stratifies the data, prioritizing responses that are or may be problematic, including giving alerts about patients who skipped the assessment. Our nurses can then call patients in an informed, prioritized fashion, provide any assistance needed over the phone, and evaluate whether further attention is needed before the next scheduled visit. **Telehealth monitoring enables Medway nurses to respond more quickly to changing health conditions and to dedicate resources where they will do the most good.**



Send Medway Your Toughest Patients.

Medway is dedicated to providing competent care for you and to *all* your patients who qualify for home health. From complex or intensive wound care to home infusion nursing to patients who live in rural areas, Medway is the home health agency ready to provide the care your patients need.

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References

1. Klersy C, De Silvestri A, Gabutti G, et al. A meta-analysis of remote monitoring of heart failure patients. *J Am Coll Cardiol.* 2009; 54: 1683-1694.
2. Gellis Z, Kenaley B, McGinty J, et al. Outcomes of a telehealth intervention for homebound older adults with heart or chronic respiratory failure: a randomized controlled trial. *The Gerontologist.* 2012 August; 52 (4): 541-52.