

Could Telemedicine Help Reduce SNF Hospitalizations? New CMS Pilot

Posted AUG 16 2017 by CTEL NEWS in CENTERS FOR MEDICARE & MEDICAID SERVICES, CMS, TELEHEALTH, TELEMEDICINE with 0 COMMENTS

Each year, hospital readmissions among skilled nursing facility (SNF) patients cost Medicare more than \$4 billion—not an insignificant sum of money. But could telemedicine help to cut down on those readmissions? That’s what the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) are seeking to find out with a new yearlong pilot program funded in conjunction with a Florida state health care agency. As *mHealth Intelligence* first reported, telemedicine provider TripleCare will be testing its after-hours virtual care platform at three Florida-based SNFs. “Changes in patients’ conditions often occur in the off hours when physicians are not physically present at SNFs,” TripleCare CEO Mary Jo Gorman noted in a press release. “This is precisely the time when TripleCare’s virtual physician services kick in.”

The not-for-profit Targeting Revolutionary Elder Care Solutions (TRECS) Institute will be coordinating the pilot program. Founded in 2004, the organization is “dedicated to improving care for seniors nationwide, which reduces costs for the U.S. health care system,” according to the TripleCare press release. The TRECS Institute has also conducted previous research on the use of telemedicine in the SNF setting. “Studies show that approximately 60 [to] 70 percent of all nursing home transfers to the hospital are unnecessary,” TRECS Institute Executive Director John Whitman said in the release. He is optimistic about the pilot study’s prospects, adding, “TRECS and TripleCare have clearly demonstrated a better patient care model that not only reduces avoidable hospitalizations and improves clinical outcomes but also generates positive economic impact for both CMS and participating SNFs.”

Notably, the telemedicine pilot program’s announcement comes at a time when, as we’ve noted before, lawmakers and advocates are increasingly asserting that Medicare is holding telehealth back. Bolstering their case: [the April Government Accountability Office \(GAO\) study](#) asserting that outdated Medicare reimbursement policies and other coverage limitations are standing in the way of wider utilization. To that end, numerous telehealth-related bills have been introduced during the 115th Congress, many specifically targeting Medicare restrictions. Among them: the *Evidence-Based Telehealth Expansion Act*, the *Telehealth Enhancement Act*, and the *Creating Opportunities Now for Necessary and Effective Care Technologies (CONNECT) for Health Act*.

[Click here to read the *mHealth Intelligence* article on the CMS pilot program.](#)

[Click here to read the TripleCare press release on the CMS pilot program.](#)

The Day Telehealth Saved Baby MaLea



Search

Search..

Connect With Us!



Be On The List

Every week, CTeL mails out an e-newsletter full of latest tips and trends in the telehealth, health care, legal and regulatory arenas. It’s all up to the minute, it’s 100% free, and you’re invited! So get on board!



[SIGN UP NOW](#)

Brown Bag Seminars



[SIGN UP NOW](#)

CTeL’s Brown Bag Telehealth Seminars are one hour information-packed events that give you behind the scenes access to telehealth leaders and emerging legal and regulatory issues!



Print Now



Like 0



Share / Save



TAGS: [Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services](#), [CMS](#), [Telehealth](#), [Telemedicine](#)
[Medicare & Medicaid Services](#), [CMS](#), [Telehealth](#), [Telemedicine](#)

CATEGORY: [Centers for](#)

Leave a Reply

NAME *

EMAIL *

WEBSITE

SUBMIT COMMENT

[Using telemedicine while fleeing Hurricane Irma – CBS News](#)

SEPTEMBER 9, 2017

[Abortion Via Telemedicine Is Totally Safe, Study Says | HuffPost – HuffPost](#)

SEPTEMBER 8, 2017

[Hurricane Irma: Free telemedicine services through Monday ... – Orlando Sentinel](#)

SEPTEMBER 8, 2017

[Medical Abortion Via Telemedicine Found Safe – MedPage Today](#)

SEPTEMBER 7, 2017

[Beware the telemedicine Trojan Horse – MedCity News](#)

SEPTEMBER 6, 2017