

Vermont Assembly of Home Health Agencies

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VAHHA Urges Lawmakers to Mandate Medicaid Payment for Telemonitoring

The members of the Vermont Assembly of Home Health and Hospice Agencies urge the Vermont Legislature to mandate Medicaid payment for home care telemonitoring.

What is Telemonitoring?

Telemonitoring is the use of telecommunication devices placed in the patient's home that take vital signs and relay the information back to the home health agency. When readings are outside the parameters set by the physician, an immediate home intervention takes place to address the patient's needs. Telemonitoring is different than telehealth (telemedicine) which generally refers to the use of video conferencing, often by physicians, to provide diagnostic information. That service was approved by the Vermont Legislature last session. Telemedicine is not a Medicaid-covered service.

Benefits from Telemonitoring

The use of telemonitoring has proved very effective in reducing hospitalization and rehospitalization rates for high-risk patients. Since the Central Vermont Home Health and Hospice started using telemonitoring monitors, the agency's rehospitalization rate dropped from 29% to 15%, among the lowest rates in the country. There are similar results from the other Vermont agencies using telemonitoring monitoring.

Telemonitoring has been effective in supporting healthy lifestyles changes by providing timely feedback on the impact of lifestyle changes. Healthy lifestyles changes are key factors in reducing emergency room visits and hospital admissions.

Efficiency

Telemonitoring lets healthcare professionals work more efficiently since the system allows one nurse to observe the clinical health of numerous patients and effectively direct medical attention to those who need it. Healthcare professionals can detect and address even the slightest abnormalities before they become serious, preventing emergency room visits and hospitalizations. This is especially important in a time of nursing shortages.

Background

Telemonitoring services have been permanently integrated into the delivery of health care throughout Vermont and provide invaluable services in the successful treatment of chronic health conditions.

Question? Call Peter Cobb at 229-0579