



Exemplary Collaboration and Partnership Pemi-Baker Hospice & Home Health

In recognition of their ongoing commitment to improving transitions of care for the patients and caregivers in their communities.



Emergency Department (ED) Visit Reductions and Hospital Observation Stays

BACKGROUND

Established in 1967, Pemi-Baker Hospice & Home Health is leader in physical therapy, palliative care, hospice care, and home health. It is a local, independent, non-profit organization providing programs and services to meet the diverse needs of 32 communities in central and northern New Hampshire. The agency has more than 70 employees and volunteers. Pemi-Baker is Medicare-certified and works with multiple insurance companies. No one is ever denied care due to an inability to pay.

One of the key areas of focus for home health agencies is helping prevent hospital readmissions. This benefits both patients and hospitals who are subject to financial penalties from CMS if certain patient types are readmitted too soon after discharge. Since the advent of home health value-based purchasing in 2023, home health agencies are being evaluated and either rewarded or penalized based on how often their patients use an ED or are re-hospitalized. The goal of this project was to reduce hospital readmissions and observation unit stays.

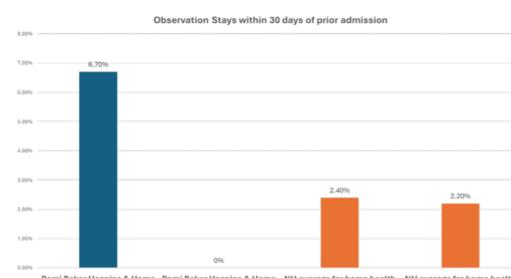
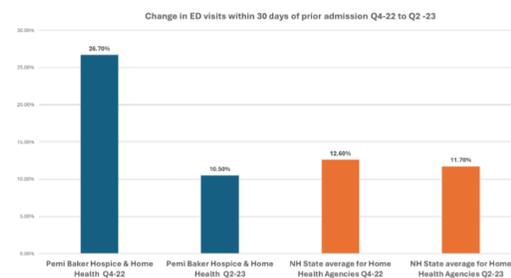
APPROACH

Staff education was provided via weekly interdisciplinary group meetings. The emphasis was on encouraging patients and caregivers to call the agency early to report changes in status. Staff were also taught to use stoplight tools, which employ simple graphics to explain symptoms/trends to watch for and when to notify the agency. These tools have proven particularly helpful for patients with lower health literacy. (1,2) (See below illustrations of stoplight tools.)

Training included breaking complex health management conversations into small “chunks” of information. Evidence supports the efficacy of this approach (termed “microlearning”) for both patients and medical professionals. (3,4) The agency also implemented a system of calls to patients shortly after admission to home health. These additional touch point opportunities help bridge the gap between field clinician visits.

RESULTS

Pemi-Baker Hospice & Home Health’s focused initiative resulted in a reduction of the rate of patients with an ED visit within 30 days of an inpatient stay from 46.7% in the fourth quarter of 2022 to 10.5% in the second quarter of 2023. For the same period, they also reduced the rate of patients with an observation stay within 30 days from 6.7% in the fourth quarter of 2022 to 0.00% in the second quarter of 2023.



ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This project was successful thanks in large part to the support and involvement from the agency’s entire staff. Thanks to all our colleagues at Pemi-Baker Hospice & Home Health.



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CONCLUSIONS

The implications of these positive outcomes are layered. The most obvious is better progressions toward recovery for patients. There is also a benefit to the agency in terms of outcome scores, some of which may impact reimbursement actions by CMS. The overall healthcare delivery system benefits from reduced costs.

Future goals include sustaining these changes over time as the patient mix is constantly evolving, and identifying new, evidenced-based strategies to engage patients and caregivers as fully as possible in their own recovery.

In 2023, IPRO QIN-QIO met with hospitals and nursing homes to understand barriers to safe care transitions. Recognizing the important role of home health, the Quality Director from Pemi-Baker was asked to participate by providing education to hospitals and long-term care providers on admission criteria for Medicare-certified home health agencies, transitions from the hospital to hospice, and the role of hospice in long-term care.

Pemi-Baker also participated in subsequent sessions, sharing challenges, best practices, and suggestions for solutions.

Pemi-Baker has a strong focus on data-driven improvement and provided input to help refine the IPRO QIN-QIO Home Health Care Transitions Reports.

Section 2: CLIENT EDUCATION

FOLEY CATHETERS

Green zone
You are in control.

Yellow zone
Take action today! Call: Day: 603-236-2232 Night or Weekends: 1-866-317-1594

Red zone
Take action NOW! Call: Day: 603-236-2232 Night or Weekends: 1-866-317-1594

SYMPTOMS—ALL CLEAR
• Urine is clear yellow with out any odor
• There is at least 1/4 cup of urine every hour
• There is no pain, itching, burning or drainage near or at the Foley exit site
• Temperature is 98.6 F or less by mouth.

SYMPTOMS—CAUTION
• The Foley has fallen out
• Urine is cloudy and/or has a slight odor
• Increased pain, itching, burning and/or drainage near or at the Foley exit site
• A feeling of bladder fullness and/or little or no urine in the drainage bag.
• Urine is leaking, bed and/or clothes are wet
• The color of the urine is dark and looks like tea.
• Temperature is 100.5 F or more by mouth.
You might have a urinary tract infection. Call your Home Health Nurse or Physician.

SYMPTOMS—ALERT!!!
• Urine is very cloudy and/or has a strong foul odor
• There is constant pain, itching, burning and/or drainage near the Foley exit site
• There is pain and/or a feeling of bladder fullness in the lower part of your stomach.
• There is no urine in bag and/or blood in urine.
• Temperature is above 100.5 F by mouth.
• Confusion and weakness.
You need to be evaluated by a physician right away! Call home health nurse at number above or Primary MD Telephone.

INFECTION CONTROL
• Continue with good personal hygiene.
• Clean and/or change the Foley bag and tubing as your Home Care Nurse instructs.

PHYSICIAN
Keep all Home Care nurse and physician appointments.

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Section 2: CLIENT EDUCATION

PREVENTING INFECTION—SIGNS & SYMPTOMS OF SEPSIS

Has your health care provider diagnosed you with an INFECTION? You could be at risk for SEPSIS. Know the signs!

WHAT IS SEPSIS?
Sepsis is your body's life-threatening response to an INFECTION anywhere in your body. Anyone can get sepsis!

SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS OF SEPSIS
Watch for a combination of INFECTION + fever or feeling chilled, confusion/sleepiness, fast heart rate, fast breathing or shortness of breath, extreme pain and pale/discolored skin.

SEPSIS IS A MEDICAL EMERGENCY

GREEN Zone: ALL CLEAR - Feeling Well!
• No fever or feeling chilled • No fast heart rate • No increase in pain
• No confusion or sleepiness • Easy breathing

RED Zone: Call your doctor or nurse immediately if you experience INFECTION and
• Fever or feeling chilled • Fast breathing or shortness of breath
• Confusion/sleepiness • Extreme Pain (recognized by others)
• Fast heart rate • Pale or discolored skin
CALL 911 OR HAVE SOMEONE TAKE YOU TO THE EMERGENCY DEPARTMENT

Key Contacts:
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Section 2: CLIENT EDUCATION

MANAGING PAIN

Pain is your body's way of telling you that something is wrong, so don't ignore it. Tell your physician and nurse where the pain is, how often you are experiencing pain and how severe it is.

- How it feels: Throbbing, burning, stabbing, cramping, aching, dull or sharp, heavy, sore, shooting, pressing, stinging, tingling.
- Where it hurts.
- When did the pain start and how long does it last.
- What makes the pain worse or better.
- How well does the treatment work.

How much it hurts: Rate your pain on a scale of 0 to 10 where 0 is no pain and 10 is the worst pain you can imagine. Reporting your pain as a number helps us know if the treatment is working.

WHY IS PAIN MANAGEMENT IMPORTANT?

- You do not have to "tough it out." Pain can get in the way of your ability to move around and exercise.
- Heavily because of pain can lead to weakness, decreased energy, and/or stress.
- Unrelieved pain can lead to chronic pain.
- It is important to tell your PBIH/HH clinician about any pain. This includes chronic pain.
- Your clinician can teach you ways to help manage your pain.

Notify your PBIH/HH clinician if pain does not improve, gets worse, or current pain management is not effective.

NUMERIC PAIN RATING SCALE

Wong-Baker FACES® Pain Rating Scale

0 No Pain 2 Hurts Little Bit 4 Hurts More 6 Hurts Even More 8 Hurts Whole Lot 10 Hurts Worst

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