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IN PARTNERSHIP WITH:



McKnights
Home Care

Get prepared:

New trends in at-home models of care

HOME HEALTH / HOSPICE / PALLIATIVE CARE / PRIVATE DUTY



Executive summary

The steady shift of acute healthcare moving to the home has been present for years. But ever since the COVID-19 pandemic forced virtually all sectors of healthcare to find new ways to deliver care outside of their four walls, that shift has accelerated. In fact, multiple organizations, including [Moving Health Home](#) and the [Advanced Care at Home Coalition](#), are pushing the Biden administration to make a stronger commitment to clinical care in the home beyond 2024, when the Acute Care at Home waiver is scheduled to expire.

There are plenty of tailwinds that make healthcare-at-home models of acute and ambulatory services more attractive and even more practical:

Both patients and providers are more amenable to using virtual technology, such as remote patient monitoring and telehealth, to connect with each other in our post-pandemic society.

Federal government-funded broadband initiatives that stemmed from learn-at-home models have opened rural areas that were once thought to be off the grid for remote healthcare.

Both government and commercial payors alike recognize the potential to drastically cut healthcare delivery costs by moving more care to the lowest cost setting — the home.

As a result, more healthcare providers are exploring alternative care delivery models, such as hospital-at-home, recovery-at-home, and skilled nursing facility (SNF) at home.



Are home health agencies prepared for these changes?

To help answer this question, MatrixCare collaborated with [McKnights](#) to conduct an industry-wide, independent survey of the organization's thousands of homecare members. The responses from nearly 200 home-based care leaders revealed some interesting statistics:

38%

of those surveyed are actively participating in an alternative care-at-home delivery model, with the most popular models among survey respondents being SNF-at-home and primary care-at-home.

46%

of those actively participating in an at-home program report that their programs are profitable.

80%

of those actively participating are using a segment-specific EHR system to manage their programs, while 8% are not using any system at all.

23%

of those who are not currently participating in a model plan to do so in the next 1-2 years, indicating that the at-home model is a growing trend that is likely to represent nearly half of the home care provider market in the next two years.

Top challenges facing the early adopters

On the surface, these new acute and ambulatory care-at-home delivery models sound logical and appealing: patients get the care they need in the setting they most prefer; providers get to manage the patient's recovery or condition in real time instead of only when they are in the office; and payors benefit from significantly lower costs of care. It's a win-win-win, right?

The answer is yes, partially. As with most breakthrough ideas and strategies, the trailblazers of healthcare-at-home are having to navigate the new frontier without answers to some of the most basic questions, such as long-term reimbursement clarity and clear regulatory guidelines.

Additional considerations include:



Staffing

Clinical staff members who are used to performing their jobs within the four walls of a facility can suddenly find themselves being asked to make "house calls." For some, this is a welcome reprieve from the chaotic hospital or physician office environment. For others, it's unknown territory that can lead to a lack of confidence or even feelings of being ill-equipped to carry out the treatment plan.



Technology infrastructure

Delivering care in the home requires a greater level of bi-directional sharing of patient information, such as patient status, documentation of care services performed vs. planned, and more. Many organizations are still dependent on outdated electronic health record (EHR) systems that are not able to interface with other systems, and therefore, that act of sharing important information becomes an even bigger challenge.



Remote care team collaboration

When care moves to the home, specialists are no longer making rounds and accessing patient records over highly connected and secure lines. They are now making remote visits. Plus, in home care, family members are typically more present, and therefore more involved in the day-to-day care of their loved ones, as they are typically living in the same space where the care is being delivered.



According to the McKnights' members surveyed, home care providers are also navigating uncharted territory. The most popular issues that respondents mentioned included:

Educating referral sources on the unique requirements, such as proper documentation, for home care as well as qualified patients

Lack of clarity surrounding reimbursement models, including the various care and community services that are required

Staffing of more qualified clinical resources to accommodate for the increase in patient populations receiving care in the home

Accountability of care network partners that are critical to addressing patient needs and ensuring optimal patient outcomes

3 practical steps to future-proofing your at-home strategy

If your agency is contemplating jumping into the at-home care delivery model game, here are three practical steps you should take to ensure your organization is best equipped for success.

1 Evaluate the readiness of your systems

Ensure your EHR system is highly capable of interacting with multiple other systems, whether it be clinical records and/or patient engagement. Highly interoperable systems will enable your team to give and receive important information in real time so you can deliver the best and most appropriate care possible, while keeping referral sources informed.

According to the survey, the following system characteristics were most important to survey respondents:

- a. Highly interoperable
- b. Advanced APIs
- c. Easy to use
- d. Mobile-ready
- e. Flexible billing model (per member/month)
- f. Able to operate even when connection not available
- g. Integrated patient/caregiver collaboration solution



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Explore potential partnerships

76% of survey respondents are partnering with health systems, payors and/or their referral sources.

Ask your current referral sources what their strategies are. As care networks continue to narrow and in-home care providers are evaluated for participation, agencies should be prepared to proactively demonstrate their ability to handle complex patients. Evidence of past performance, particularly in value-based care contracts, will be necessary to earn the trust and confidence of the other participating organizations.

3

Stay current on regulatory guides as this trend matures

There are numerous sources, including McKnights' home-based care group, Moving Health Home, and the Advanced Care at Home Coalition, that are actively engaged in policy discussions to ensure these new models are safe and effective. Home-based care providers should designate someone to monitor these trends to ensure they remain compliant with the rapidly evolving requirements.

An eye to the future

As the lines between care settings continue to blur, and blur faster than the reimbursement and regulatory guidelines can sustain, it is incumbent on home-based care providers to stay informed on emerging acute and ambulatory healthcare-at-home models. Those who lead the way are most likely to secure first-mover competitive advantage and remain relevant in the next generation of healthcare delivery.

About MatrixCare

MatrixCare provides software solutions in out-of-hospital care settings. As the multiyear winner of the Best in KLAS award for Long-Term Care Software and Home Health and Hospice EMR, MatrixCare is trusted by thousands of facility-based and home-based care organizations to improve provider efficiencies and promote a better quality of life for the people they serve. As an industry leader in interoperability, MatrixCare helps providers connect and collaborate across the care continuum to optimize outcomes and successfully manage risk in out-of-hospital care delivery.

About ResMed SaaS

As a global leader in health technology, ResMed has developed transformative cloud-connected medical devices and solutions for people with sleep apnea, COPD and other chronic diseases. Today the company is applying this digital health expertise more broadly through its SaaS solutions, MatrixCare and Brightree, offering comprehensive software platforms that support healthcare providers in settings outside of the hospital.