

EXECUTIVE BRIEF

The Anatomy of a Care Transition: Connecting Care Teams and Patients Across Settings



Electronic Health Records (EHRs) have revolutionized the way health care providers manage patient information, but their potential to smooth the often-turbulent path of care transitions remains untapped. As patients move between care settings, the risk of miscommunication and errors can significantly increase, potentially leading to adverse patient outcomes. However, the advanced functionalities of modern EHR systems can specifically target and alleviate these pain points.

EHRs hold the key to more seamless, safe and efficient transitions of care by:

1. Enhancing data access
2. Improving communication among care teams and patients
3. Ensuring a continuous flow of actionable information

Deborah Wesley, CEO of Addison County Home Health and Hospice, has worked with EHR leader MatrixCare since September of 2017 to solve their unique challenges with care transitions. Addison County Home Health and Hospice makes over 60,000 visits to more than 1,500 patients each year in the Greater New Haven, VT area. This executive brief addresses some of the key pain points associated with care transitions, and how today's EHR technology solves those problems.



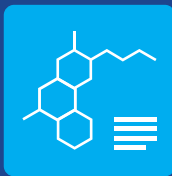
*Deborah Wesley,
CEO, Addison County
Home Health and
Hospice*

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ENHANCING DATA ACCESS

Care transitions are complex at face value, so in a setting that lacks robust technology infrastructure and IT teams on site, there is a lot more riding on an EHR's ability to make data accurate and easily accessible.



Streamlining patient information into one centralized database provides caregivers with a complete set of patient data through a single point of access, and consolidating this data not only simplifies the retrieval of information, but also cuts down the time required for caregivers to find exactly what they need before each visit. By partnering with MatrixCare, Addison County has been able to support enhanced remote data access so that caregivers can make more informed care decisions regardless of a patient's location.

And in a space where caregivers operate across multiple business units, and where patients are often involved with several of these units simultaneously, this technology has been a pivotal factor in driving successful outcomes.

Further, adopting a capable EHR can reduce manual tasks and save care teams a significant amount of time. "Being able to click a button and copy the entire referral reduces what used to take half an hour down to seconds," says Wesley. "Instead of someone needing to go out to a system, download, scan, copy and input the information, it's all there." These efficiencies are not simply achieved by transferring files electronically, but avoiding the need to manually download, scan, and upload documents entirely.

5 Key Benefits: **Data Access**

- ❖ Single point, remote access across settings
- ❖ Ease and urgency of information retrieval
- ❖ Elimination of manual input
- ❖ Time saved
- ❖ Snapshot of health and treatment plan

Improving access to key health information bolsters diagnostics, patient monitoring and treatment planning to optimize value and enhance the care experience for everyone involved.

IMPROVING STAFF AND PATIENT COMMUNICATION

Staff cannot effectively transition patients between settings unless they have clear communication with care teams on each front, and clear communication with the patients as well. Since Wesley's teams are responsible for moving numerous patients across home health, hospice, waiver and outpatient units, they rely on MatrixCare's unified system for improved inter-unit communication with instant access to real-time information like medication alerts, showing recent refills that can be confirmed and verified without manual input. It empowers staff to focus more on engaging directly with the patient while using technology to enhance the visit.

“MatrixCare's EHR has allowed us to create an environment of collaboration for our staff. Be it in-person or through communication systems, the level of interoperability makes caregivers more successful in the care they're delivering.”

— Deborah Wesley, CEO
Addison County Home
Health and Hospice



On the patient side, MatrixCare bolsters engagement and communication through tools like secure messaging and patient portals. Secure messaging facilitates reliable and private communication between patients and their providers so they can better manage chronic conditions and answer treatment-related inquiries without the need for an in-person visit. Patient portals offer direct access to each individual's medical records, lab results, appointment schedule and prescription list.

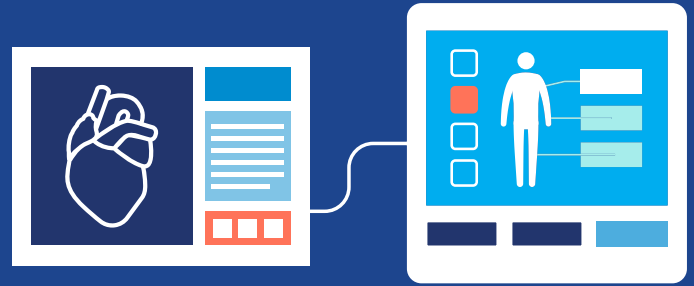
With these tools, teams can spend less time on administrative tasks and more time providing direct care, reviewing all of the necessary information before ever stepping foot in a patient's home. Further, patients can become more involved in their health management and easily communicate with their providers, leading to better continuity of care and improved outcomes through a collaborative effort.

5 Key Benefits: **Communication**

- ❖ More focus and time on patient engagement and direct care
- ❖ Private, secure and convenient messaging
- ❖ Higher level of patient involvement
- ❖ Patient portal
- ❖ Elimination of unnecessary in-person visits

ENSURING A CONTINUOUS FLOW OF ACTIONABLE DATA

Care transitions are timely and sensitive, often marked by a significant health event, and providers don't have the luxury to sift through volumes of data under these circumstances. MatrixCare helps Addison County's caregivers move patients across settings more efficiently with a comprehensive patient snapshot of patient details that they can update on-the-fly to ensure data is both current and accurate. Providers can leverage this system to eliminate redundancy and put all of the essential details like notes, labs, office visits and medications at caregivers' fingertips to prevent lapses in care and in turn, more adverse health events.



5 Key Benefits: **Data Flow**

- ❖ Ease of sorting voluminous information
- ❖ Currency and accuracy of patient details
- ❖ Swift adjustments to treatment plans
- ❖ More informed clinical decision-making
- ❖ Timely interventions through predictive analytics

Addison County's patients were originally part of a local government system, and caregivers often saw many of the same individuals repeatedly. Now, with MatrixCare, they've significantly streamlined their processes, and the time savings are enormous, says Wesley. More importantly, however, the accuracy of their documentation

has improved. Wesley's goal is to make Addison County's records audit-proof, and their partnership with MatrixCare has been transformative in that mission.

Creating a dynamic data environment with a qualified EHR not only maintains data currency but also transforms it into a potent tool for enhancing care delivery and operational effectiveness. In an operating environment plagued by staff shortages, financial constraints, and a shifting regulatory landscape, the importance of these capabilities are paramount for the success of patients and providers alike.

EMPOWER CARE TEAMS WITH THE RIGHT EHR

As the home-based care landscape continues to evolve, EHRs will play a pivotal role in facilitating smooth transitions between care settings. By enhancing data accessibility, improving communication among care teams and their patients, and ensuring a continuous flow of actionable information, EHRs hold the key to more seamless, safe and efficient transitions of care. Providers should be looking for an EHR partner that can empower them with these tools as the demand for home-based care increases to make the greatest possible impact on all stakeholders involved in the care journey.



This article is sponsored by MatrixCare. MatrixCare's EHR is built to improve clinical and operational efficiency, so clinicians can focus on deeper connections with patients and families.

To learn more about the impact they are making in the home health space, visit www.matrixcare.com/home-health-software.

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