May 2010

Baystate Visiting Nurse Association & Hospice

The Largest Meta-Analysis to Date on

Telehealth vs. Usual Care for Heart Failure

This past November, the *Journal of the American College of Cardiology* published the largest meta-analysis to date on the effectiveness of telehealth monitoring for patients with heart failure.[1] Researchers concluded that telehealth monitoring provides an additional protective effect compared to usual care. For instance, telehealth monitoring with equipment such as the monitors used by Baystate Visiting Nurse Association & Hospice (BVNAH) reduced mortality rates by 28% on average. Such monitoring also reduced the rate of rehospitalizations for heart failure by 26% on average.

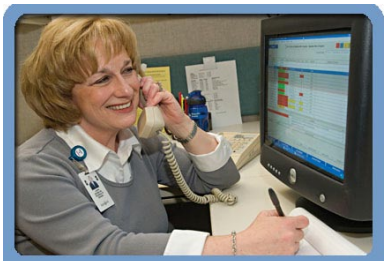
The Heart Failure Program at Baystate Visiting Nurse Association and Hospice makes telehealth monitors available to your homebound patients at risk of exacerbation. In addition to normal nursing visits, the telehealth monitoring devices interact with your patient on a daily basis. The monitors take blood pressure, pulse, oxygen saturation, and weight, and they collect patient answers to disease specific questions. The monitors then send the data electronically to the BVNAH office. The system flags any data outside of pre-programmed safe parameters. From our office, a BVNAH nurse reviews all data daily and makes needed responses.

As a premise of their meta-analysis, Dr. Klersy and colleagues noted that the American College of Cardiology and the American Heart Association task forces on practice guidelines recommend a multidisciplinary care approach for the continuum of heart failure care.[2] The recommended multi-disciplinary approach is implemented with in-person follow-up visits. Therefore, this meta-analysis only included studies wherein the "usual care" group received the recommended multi-disciplinary, in-person, follow-up care. A simple referral to Baystate Visiting Nurse Association and Hospice helps physicians easily implement this recommended care.

Our Heart Failure Program includes:

- nutritional coaching,
- skilled assessment,
- medication compliance coaching,
- training for recognizing s/s of acute episodes,
- emergency planning,
- energy conservation, and
- home improvement.

The BVNAH Heart Failure Program has proven results for preserving patient health and preventing unnecessary hospitalizations. During 4th quarter 2009, fewer than 14% of patients in this program were re-hospitalized.



BVNAH Telehealth Nurse Monitors Daily Results

BVNAH Expands & Improves Telehealth Program

Baystate Visiting Nurse Association and Hospice has increased capacity for the Heart Failure Program to include a total of 70 Telehealth monitors. They made this investment to help ensure that all your patients in need of additional monitoring can receive it in a timely fashion. In addition to protecting your patients with CHF, the expansion makes Telehealth monitoring more available to your patients with COPD and other diagnoses that can benefit from enhanced monitoring. BVNAH not only expanded the program; they improved it. BVNAH has transitioned their Telehealth program to a Lifestream data access platform which enables BVNAH clinicians to electronically send to physicians results in color charts rather than having to fax these results.

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References

1. Klersy C, De Silvestri A, Gabutti G, et al. A meta-analysis of remote monitoring of heart failure patients. J Am Coll Cardiol. 2009; 54: 1683-1694.

2. Hunt S, Abraham W, Chin M, et al. ACC/AHA 2005 guideline update for the diagnosis and management of chronic heart failure in the adult: a report of the American College of Cardiology/American Heart Association Task Force on Practice Guidelines. J Am Coll Cardiol 2005; 46: e1-e82.