

Reducing Readmissions with Transitional Case Management

A combination of interventions can lead to a decrease in readmissions.

One in 12 adults discharged from a hospital is readmitted within 30 days, adding \$16 billion to the cost of health care in the United States¹. To address this issue and explore different innovations in health care, Optum conducted a study on Transitional Case Management (TCM) interventions. Optum's TCM process evaluates and coordinates post-hospitalization needs for members identified as being at risk of re-hospitalization or as frequent users of high-cost services. In an effort to continually improve its programs, Optum conducted a Parallel Variable Testing (PVT) study on both commercial and Medicare populations. This study assessed how TCM interventions can reduce readmissions among these populations.

Commercial Results

The study found that implementing certain TCM interventions can lead to a reduction in both 30-day and 60-day readmissions among the commercial population.




Reduction in 30-day readmits



Reduction in 60-day readmits for engaged members



The combination of interventions that resulted in the lowest 60-day readmission rate was:

- Completing a follow-up call within seven days of initial contact 
- Offering members a behavioral health contact for all eligible TCM calls
- Completing a follow-up call after a physician visit, while allowing case managers to do the right thing for members by removing talk time constraints 
- Conducting more focused discussions around readmission awareness and how to keep consumers out of the hospital, while allowing case managers to do the right thing for members by removing talk time constraints 

Research Methodology

Optum conducted a PVT study on two populations: Commercial and Medicare.

Commercial	Medicare
16 interventions tested	15 interventions tested
42 nurses allocated at random to 24 intervention combinations	20 nurses allocated at random to 20 intervention combinations

Intervention groups for both populations included telephone reinforcement, follow-up appointments, outstanding tests, health literacy, patient education, medication reconciliation, caregiver education, and a "be here now" focus, which requires case managers to be fully present in the moment and to remove distractions while interacting with members.

¹. Anna Sommers & Peter J. Cunningham. "Physician Visits after Hospital Discharge: Implications for Reducing Readmissions." National Institute for Health Reform. December 2011.

Medicare Results

The study also found that certain TCM interventions lead to a reduction in readmissions for the Medicare population.

Reduction in 30-day readmits



Reduction in 60-day readmits for engaged members



The combination of interventions that resulted in the lowest 60-day readmission rate was:

- Arranging follow-up appointments with PCP on behalf of member
- Using a personal health record for talking points with members
- Requiring case managers to research drug interactions and dosages
- Using the Health Literacy Teach Back Method



The Bottom Line

Through well-planned and well-executed TCM interventions, unplanned readmissions may be able to be reduced. This study and others have shown that providing holistic patient management, care follow up, medication adherence assistance and health education can lead to better outcomes and lower costs for members, employers and health care organizations.

Optum Case Management

- 1 Achieve client wellness and autonomy through advocacy, communication, education, identification of service resource and facilitation.
- 2 Built on a foundation of proven methodologies, including the Coleman Pillars, Milliman Guidelines and Project RED Checklist.
- 3 Committed to continuous improvement and measuring our success based on the outcomes we provide to clients.
- 4 Provide services across the entire health care community, including third-party payers, small and large employers, consumers, providers and government payers.

For an in-depth look at this study, watch our **on-demand webinar** at optumhealth.com/tcmpvt

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