Improving Transitions in Care — Reducing Hospital Readmissions

When discharged from the hospital, the last thing a patient wants is to be admitted again. Yet, according to the Institute for Healthcare Improvement (IHI), it happens more often than it should. In fact, a 2007 Congressional report by the Medicare Payment Advisory Commission noted that the majority of readmissions could likely be avoided with better transitions.

“Gaps in planning for the transition to home, failures in communication, and delays in scheduling post-discharge care all contribute to avoidable and costly readmissions to the hospital,” noted Valerie McMahon, clinical resource management coordinator at Samaritan Hospital. “A good transition out of the hospital can significantly impact a patient’s quality of life and prevent another unnecessary hospitalization.”

In 2009, Northeast Health patient care division began working with IHI on a collaborative called “Reducing Avoidable Readmissions by Improving Transitions in Care” with the aim being to reduce 30-day readmission rates by 30 percent by December 2010, and increase patient and family satisfaction with optimal coordination of care.

“We realized that what happens after discharge is crucial to avoiding a rehospitalization,” said Valerie, who noted that as a network of acute, long-term and primary care services, Northeast Health is in the unique position to provide seamless care beyond the hospital setting.

Karen Julian, clinical resource management coordinator at Albany Memorial and co-facilitator of the network-wide initiative explained, “We utilize a multidisciplinary approach to prevent avoidable readmissions by involving staff from across the Northeast Health continuum, including the hospitals, Eddy Visiting Nurse Association (VNA), Eddy Heritage House Nursing and Rehabilitation Center, and the Northeast Health Primary Care Network.”

Hospital case managers review each admission for patients who may be at-risk for readmission, i.e. patients with such diagnoses as diabetes, congestive heart failure (CHF) and chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD). Those with two or more readmissions in the past year or identified by their physician to be at-risk, are also included.

Once at-risk patients are identified, they are assessed for their understanding of their disease and provided enhanced teaching and learning so that they -- and their families -- can be better self-managers. Case managers also coordinate care at discharge across settings, including making referrals to the hospitals’ program for congestive heart failure (The Heart Program at Albany Memorial Hospital) and the Diabetes Center.

Another important component is Eddy VNA’s Coach Program which helps patients better manage their disease and remain at home. The Eddy VNA coach visits patients during their hospital stay and then visits them at home, usually within 48 hours of discharge. The coach reviews the patient’s medications, makes sure he/she has a follow-up doctor’s visit scheduled within seven days, and provides other tools to help patients self-manage their condition.

Valerie and Karen report that in December 2010, the readmission rate to Samaritan Hospital was 11.2 percent, and at Albany Memorial, 11 percent, down from 20 percent when the improvement initiative began in 2009.

“By empowering patients, improving referrals to needed services, and enhancing communication between levels of care, we have seen a dramatic decrease in readmission rates,” they concluded.
A Message from the Chairman

Dear Friends,

I would like to introduce myself as the new chair of the Northeast Health Foundation’s Board of Directors, and to thank James E. Prout, Esq., the former chair, for his outstanding leadership during the last three years.

I joined The Eddy board in 1999 and, in 2004, became a member of the foundation board. I am very proud of my affiliation with Northeast Health.

These are both exciting and difficult times. We look forward to a proposed merger with St. Peter’s Health Care Services and Seton Health which promises to improve access to, and delivery of, healthcare in our region. At the same time, we are experiencing a slowly recovering economy. Despite these changing and challenging times, we still need your help!

I am pleased to say we are off to a good start in 2011! As a result of our donors stepping up to the “Standish Challenge,” we expect groundbreaking and construction to begin this year for a new Town Hall at Eddy Village Green in Cohoes. Thank you for your generosity in making this happen.

This year’s Patient Care Gala, Jewels in the Night, was a tremendous success. With almost 600 people in attendance, we were able to raise over $88,000 for Albany Memorial and Samaritan Hospitals. Proceeds from this year’s gala will be shared equally — Albany Memorial Hospital will renovate and modernize one of its operating rooms to support invasive procedures, and Samaritan Hospital will complete its catheterization lab percutaneous coronary intervention (PCI) project so that physicians will be able to perform balloon and stent procedures to reopen clogged arteries. Thank you for your support of this successful event.

Charitable giving plays a tremendous role and we hope you will consider a generous gift to the Northeast Health Foundation so we can continue to fulfill our mission of care and concern to the residents of the Capital Region. Again, thank you for what you have already done and continue to do for our patients and residents.

Best wishes,

Robert F. Bristol, Chair

Patient Care Gala

The 2011 Jewels in the Night Patient Care Gala was a dazzling success! Nearly 600 people supported the event which raised close to $88,000 for Albany Memorial and Samaritan hospitals.

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Wish List

As not-for-profit organizations, Northeast Health affiliates depend on your financial support to purchase needed equipment and supplies. Here are just a few items from our wish list:

**Eddy VNA** has been piloting the use of a monitored medication dispensing technology for the past two years and currently has 25 units in place. Staff has seen significant improvement in patient adherence to complex medication regimes and real-time notification of noncompliance. We wish to expand the number of monitored medication dispensers available for those without coverage or private resources. **Total need is $36,000, or you can sponsor one unit.**

**Eddy Alzheimer’s Services Care Teams** have proven effective in supporting people coping with Alzheimer’s disease and other memory problems. The team approach allows volunteers to do what they enjoy doing, when they are available to do it, but in an organized manner with a built-in support system to share the care. Volunteers working together demonstrate the impact of team efforts when everyone pulls a little and a great deal is accomplished. **Total need is $46,500, or you can sponsor one team.**

**The Eddy Haven for Abused Elderly** is a short-term safe residence for victims of elder abuse, including physical, sexual, financial or emotional abuse, abandonment or neglect. Funds are needed for an elder’s short-term stay, for advocacy and relocation. **Refuge for an elder at Eddy Haven for one week is $2,400.**

**Samaritan Hospital Spiritual Care** department provides spiritual and emotional support for patients, family, loved ones and caregivers experiencing stress related to illness and hospitalization, offering a sustaining presence and serving as integral members of the interdisciplinary team. The department’s wish list includes:

- Seasonal banners to help create beautiful, calming scenery in the chapel. $50 - 100.
- Live flowers for Christmas, Easter and the seasons, as well as green plants. $50 - 150.
- Chairs, bookcase and floor lamps. $50 - 250.
- I-Pod to play instrumental music to create a soothing environment. $200-$400.
- Five CD/DVD players to provide soothing music, natural sounds and images to create an atmosphere of recovery and well-being. $100 - 500.
- Muralvision Video, scenic nature videos for the hospital’s closed circuit TV system, to uplift and give hope. Calming images of nature provide patients with relaxation and aid in the healing process. $750 - 1,500.

To learn more about these and other wish list items, please contact the foundation at (518) 274-0190.

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Cuisine Magic 2011

Despite the wintry March weather, nearly 450 guests attended Cuisine Magic 2011 at the Crowne Plaza in Albany on Sunday, March 6. More than $32,000 was raised for the Eddy Visiting Nurse Association.

Congratulations to Best in Show winners - The Old Daley Inn Catering Company & The Old Daley Inn on Crooked Lake.

Northeast Health Board Chair, Bob Johnson and wife, Nancy.
Together, we made a difference!

2010 Employee Fund Drive

The 2010 Employee Fund Drive raised $163,133 with a 40 percent participation rate across the Northeast Health network! According to Cheryl Rankey, Northeast Health Foundation’s Director of Annual Fund and Special Constituencies, “We are especially pleased that the Northeast Health Employee Crisis Fund received more than $32,000 in designations. The fund provides confidential, emergency financial assistance for staff members who face unusual and severe financial strain due to a sudden, unforeseen crisis.”

The Employee Fund Drive was established in 2006 to provide employees with an opportunity to demonstrate financial support for Northeast Health through a charitable donation. Since then, employees have contributed more than $750,000 to 109 different funds which support various programs and services across the network.

“Thank you to our employees for making the 2010 Northeast Employee Fund Drive an outstanding success,” stated Cheryl. “Your participation exemplifies your commitment to Northeast Health and helps make a difference in the lives of so many people.”

Together, the Employees of Northeast Health Make a Difference!

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The term “planned giving” refers to charitable gifts that require some planning before they are made. Planned gifts are popular because they can provide valuable tax benefits and/or income for life. Whether a donor uses cash or other assets, such as appreciated stocks, real estate, or partnership interests, the benefits of a planned gift can make this type of charitable giving very attractive to both the donor and charity.

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- Gifts of Cash
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- Retained Life Estate
- Retirement Assets

Please consult your own financial or legal advisor before proceeding with any planned gift arrangement.

For more information on planned giving, please contact Northeast Health Foundation at (518) 274-0190.
Visions of Strength

Thank you to everyone who helped make Visions of Strength 2010 such a tremendous success! The event, held on October 7, 2010 at Franklin Terrace in Troy, raised more than $44,000 for the Karen L. Mosseau Fund to benefit the Integrative Wellness Program at the Cancer Treatment Center at Samaritan Hospital. Mark your calendar for this year’s event which will take place on Thursday, October 6, 2011!

SimMan® is a Reality at Our Schools

For more than 100 years, the alumni associations for Memorial Hospital School of Nursing and Samaritan Hospital School of Nursing have supported student members and graduates of our schools. Recently, both organizations provided the generous funding necessary to make each school’s wish to acquire SimMan® a reality.

SimMan® is a portable and advanced patient simulator for team training with realistic anatomy and clinical functionality. It provides simulation-based education to challenge and test students’ clinical and decision-making skills during realistic patient care scenarios. The well-proven software and interactive technologically advanced manikins allow learners to practice the treatment of patients. It also provides experiences for the nursing students that they may not encounter in their clinical rotations.

If you are interested in more information regarding our alumni associations, please visit our web site www.NortheastHealth.com.

Our Grateful Patients

Recently, several grateful patients made contributions to Albany Memorial Hospital.

• Irwin Smith and his business, Surpass Chemical Company, donated more than $20,000 to Albany Memorial Hospital in memory of his wife, Marcia and in recognition of the staff on the 3rd floor for their compassionate care.

• The Diabetes Center received a $1,000 grant from the E. A. Barvoets Fund.

• Frederick Zimmer made a $5,000 donation in memory of Ella and Samson Zimmer to Albany Memorial Hospital’s Center for Wound Care and Hyperbaric Medicine which provides a variety of clinical treatments and support services to help individuals with hard-to-heal wounds.

Wondering how you can help? You can show your appreciation for the care you received in one of our hospitals, nursing homes, enriched housing and assisted living residences, Alzheimer’s communities or through our home care program by making a personal gift.

Your gift to the Northeast Health Foundation helps us continue to provide the compassionate care and superior services that our community has come to expect from us. You can be sure that your contribution will be used for the department or service you choose.

Sharing the Vision and Securing the Future through Education

Linda Dunham, Saratoga County case manager for the Eddy VNA, was awarded the 2010 Harriet B. Bahn Excellence in Nursing Award. Harriet Bahn was a devoted alumnus of Memorial Hospital School of Nursing class of 1918. This award is bestowed upon a registered nurse who exemplifies professional nursing through demonstrated patient care, excellent nursing practice, and promotion of a positive working environment.

Tamara J. Hess, RN, was presented the Mildred M. and William C. Bahn Registered Nurses Advance Study Scholarship by Mary Hannan, assistant vice president, patient care services. Tamara works in the emergency department and has been an employee of Albany Memorial Hospital since 2008. She is pursuing her bachelor’s degree at SUNY Delhi. The purpose of this scholarship is to encourage licensed registered nurses to continue studies in nursing and related clinical sciences.

Noria Rasouli and Rebecca Robinson received Samaritan Hospital School of Nursing’s Marilyn Calhoun Scholarship given to a student studying maternal/child health. Support for this scholarship comes from annual donations in Marilyn’s memory through fundraising efforts at St. Bonaventure’s Church, 50 Hillview Drive, Troy.
In 1925, Elizabeth Hart Eddy wanted to help elders. Today, she’s still doing it.

You can touch the lives of seniors throughout the Capital Region for years to come. Consider including a charitable bequest in your will.

Contact the Northeast Health Foundation at (518) 274-0190.

The Eddy
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Calendar Corner

SAVE THE DATE!

River of Life
Boat Cruise and Dinner Dance
To benefit Eddy Alzheimer’s Services

Thursday, September 22, 2011
Aboard the Captain JP
(Front Street, Troy)

For more information, please call the Northeast Health Foundation, 271-5032, or email Krukk@nehealth.com.


For information about supporting Northeast Health, contact Northeast Health Foundation at 274-0190, 274-0192 (fax), 2224 Burdett Ave., Troy, NY 12180.

If you wish to have your name removed from our fundraising request list, please call us at (518) 274-0190. You can also e-mail neh_foundation@nehealth.com.