



What's up Doc? case management news

30 DAY REHOSPITALIZATIONS

A study in the NEW ENGLAND JOURNAL OF MEDICINE showed that one-fifth (19.9%) of Medicare beneficiaries were rehospitalized within 30 days of discharge, at a cost of \$17.4 billion. The study concluded that the average stay of rehospitalized patients was 0.6 days longer than patients in the same diagnosis-related group (DRG) whose most recent hospitalization had been at least six months previously.

Not all readmissions are avoidable and not all avoidable readmissions are the fault of the hospital, hospitals still should share accountability for readmission rates that could be much lower. No longer is the thinking "a full bed is better than and empty bed". There are so many reimbursement penalties for inappropriate admissions that were payable in the past. We need to asses things differently and keep inappropriate patients out of the hospital.

Medicare regulations mandate that if a patient is readmitted due to inadequate or incomplete care during the first admission, the two admis-

sions should be combined and paid as one DRG. This regulation is applied to all readmissions regardless of the time span between the two admissions. For patients readmitted within 24 hours of discharge, the hospital is expected to combine the two admissions and be reimbursed for one DRG unless the two admits are completely unrelated.

What can we do to decrease readmits?

- **More aggressive discharge planning**
- **Make sure patients have a follow-up visit Recommended within 7 days.**
- **Evaluate for post -acute care More than 64% of patients readmitted did not receive post-acute care such as home health.**
- **Collect Data Evaluate reasons for readmission and use this for performance improvement opportunities.**

CMS HOSPITAL COMPARE

Now that hospitals 30-day readmission rates for heart failure, heart attack, and pneumonia are being posted on the Hospital Compare web site, the stage is set for the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) to start reducing or eliminating payments for patients who are readmitted to the hospital.

In July CMS began reporting the readmission rates on their web site as "better than," "no different from," or "worse than" the national rate.

How did LJCMC measure up?

"no different from" in all areas.

CMS reports that on average

- 24.5% of Heart failure
- 18.2% of Pneumonia
- 19.9% of AMI

Patients will be readmitted within 30 days of discharge.

LJCMC 30 DAY READMISSIONS FOR JULY 2009

13.5%



PHYSICIAN REMINDERS:

THE PRESIDENT AND CONGRESS HAVE BOTH IDENTIFIED THE REDUCTION OF HOSPITAL READMISSIONS AS A TARGET AREA FOR HEALTH REFORM.

• Questions? Contact Debbie Picou, RN 873-1833