

FirstLight HomeCare of Atlanta Readmission Rescue Program

Each year, hospitalization readmissions account for nearly one third of the total \$2 trillion spent on health care in the US. A substantial fraction of these readmissions are avoidable patient readmissions that result from improper home care or early hospital discharge. The Affordable Care Act, also referred to as Obama Care, is attempting to reduce this high rate of avoidable hospital readmissions by charging hospitals a penalty for each patient that is readmitted within 30 days of discharge. In order to aid in the reduction of unnecessary hospital readmissions, FirstLight HomeCare of Atlanta has developed a unique program known as the Readmission Rescue Program. FirstLight's Readmission Rescue Program was designed to reduce hospital readmissions through non-medical home care that focuses on the patient's unique health needs. What sets FirstLight HomeCare of Atlanta apart from similar home care programs is its attention to patient education and 24-hour availability with telehealth services for comprehensive offsite care. In order to better understand this program, we have provided five things you need to know about the FirstLight HomeCare of Atlanta Readmission Rescue program.

1. How Non-Medical Home Care Helps Reduce Hospital Readmissions

Our FirstLight HomeCare of Atlanta Readmission Rescue program is a non-medical home care program that reduces hospital readmissions through a personalized, patient-focused strategy. Through providing a thorough and personalized care plan for its patients, FirstLight can help eliminate the avoidable causes of hospital readmission. One of the key components to reducing readmission is through education. As mentioned above, nearly one third of hospital readmissions are avoidable. To ensure proper home care is provided and simple mistakes in care are reduced, FirstLight educates patients, family, and caregivers on proper care techniques. In addition to educating its clients, FirstLight provides 24-hour availability and response for the following:

- Special diet meal preparation, exercise, and hydration assistance
- Medication reminders and transportation to medical appointments
- Observation, measurement, and monitoring of key condition indicators
- Early intervention (call to doctor)
- Outcome trending and data along with client satisfaction reporting
- Telehealth solutions (additional service fees required)
- Personal medication systems
- Remote vitals monitoring
- Personal emergency response systems

2. How Readmission Rescue Works

The FirstLight HomeCare of Atlanta Readmission Rescue begins when the hospital discharge planner/case manager discharges the patient home with FirstLight HomeCare and notes the discharge date tracking. FirstLight HomeCare then develops a

personalized plan based on the patient's diagnosis and educates the patient and his or her family on how to assist at home. These instructions include special diet preparation, medication administration, and doctor appointment compliance. FirstLight will also monitor indicators for intervention, such as weight and B/P. If the patient falls outside of normal parameters through FirstLight's monitoring, an early call is made to the doctor to intervene, and the patient's personalized plan is changed. The patient remains at home with a new plan and avoids readmission to the hospital.

3. What is Telehealth Care?

Telehealth care (aka telemetry) is a term used to describe a service that allows nurses to monitor a patient's health from a distance. The service utilizes a technological device that sends vital information to nurses located away from the patient's home. Telehealth care is an expansion on the preventative services provided in FirstLight's home care program, mentioned above, that provides a more reliable and less obtrusive system for nurses to care for their patients.

The telemetry device used to monitor patients consists of a glucometer, a blood pressure cuff, and a weight scale which is installed in the patient's home and sends biometric data to the Care Center. The device can monitor a wide range of chronic illnesses, including diabetes, congestive heart failure, hypertension, COPD, and asthma. Once the data is sent to the Care Center, nurses review the readings and send alerts to the patient's care providers or physician if they fall outside of predetermined boundaries.

4. The Cost of the Rescue Readmission Program

Readmission Rescue is a free service provided for all clients as part of the FirstLight HomeCare of Atlanta non-medical home care packages. However, for an additional service fee, FirstLight HomeCare provides advanced telehealth solutions like personal medication systems, remote vitals monitoring, and personal emergency response (medical alert) systems.

5. The Success of the Readmission Rescue Program

FirstLight HomeCare has seen early success with the service. In a one-year study, FirstLight has found a 58% reduction in all-cause readmissions, and an overall drop in emergency room related visits by 55%. Over the past year, the program has proven success by helping clients stay independent longer with fewer readmissions to hospitals. The program's success will only continue to grow as new telehealth services are introduced and improved upon allowing for highly-trained FirstLight Atlanta caregivers to provide real-time care.