The Role of the RT in Homecare and Pulmonary Rehab: What the Future May Hold

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It's great to be here but I had a tough time getting ready this morning...

PROGRAM OBJECTIVES
At the end of this session, you will be able to:

- Identify 3 factors which are influencing the role RTs are playing in homecare and pulmonary rehabilitation
- Discuss at least 2 positive steps RTs need to take in order to secure their positions in home care and pulmonary rehab
DISCLOSURE

I have no financial involvement or interest in any of the manufacturers, products and/or services that may be mentioned during this presentation.

Kenneth A. Wyka

ISSUES AND CHALLENGES

- Economy
- Government mandates
  * Capped rentals
  * Overall allowable cuts
  * Audits
  * Competitive bidding
  * CMS deadlines
  * Affordable Care Act (ACA)

ISSUES AND CHALLENGES–cont’d

- Insurance contracts (HMOs, PPOs, etc)
- Homecare provider resources
  * Facilities
  * Personnel
  * Equipment and supplies
- Efficiency of operations
- Reimbursement for RT services in the home
- Availability of and reimbursement for pulmonary rehabilitation
- Other…the unknown
OVERVIEW OF RESPIRATORY HOME CARE

- Oxygen equipment and related therapy
- Compressor/nebulizers and medications
- Sleep therapy (PAP devices)
- Mechanical ventilation
- Airway management (50 psi compressors, suction, trach care, cough assist & airway clearance devices)
- Apnea monitoring
- Patient testing (overnight pulse ox and sleep apnea)

HOME OXYGEN

- CMS mandated 36 month capped rental
  - Patients who travel (snowbirds) or move
  - Inability to switch home care providers because of dissatisfaction and/or poor service
  - Provisions for portable oxygen systems
- Continued reductions in reimbursement
- Coverage for RT visits? (many states require this)
- Competitive bidding

HEADLINES

- Most industry prognosticators depicted a dire picture for the home care industry beginning in 2010
- However, analysts are now giving meaningful suggestions on how to successfully weather the storm
- These headlines are not what Jay Leno had in mind but I’m sure he could give them a humorous twist
SO WHAT DOES THE FUTURE HOLD FOR US?
IS IT GLOOMY?

OR IS THE OUTLOOK BRIGHT?

ANSWERS TO THESE QUESTIONS

- Relies in our ability to grow as a profession
- Recognition on the federal level (HR 2619) – Medicare coverage of pulmonary self-management education and training services furnished by qualified RTs in a physician practice
- Pursuing advanced degrees and credentials
- Recognition of value-added services RTs provide
- Our continued involvement in managing lung disease
GOALS OF MANAGING CHRONIC LUNG DISEASE

- Relieve symptoms
- Prevent disease progression
- Improve exercise tolerance
- Improve health status
- Prevent and treat complications
- Prevent and treat exacerbations
- Reduce mortality

PATIENT CARE PLAN

- Elimination of noxious agents (smoking cessation and work-related interventions)
- Know and avoid triggers
- Infection control through personal hygiene and immunizations (influenza and pneumonia vaccines)
- Compliance with medication regimen (oral and inhaled) and home oxygen therapy
- Nutrition and hydration
- Exercise and daily activities (ADLs)
- Stress management

KEYS TO MAKE THIS HAPPEN

- Effective home care begins with discharge planning
  * Identification of appropriate equipment
  * In-home patient assessment and delivery of prescribed care
  * Patient and caregiver education
- Implementation of a disease management program in the home
- Enrollment in pulmonary rehabilitation
- Follow-up and ongoing care
DISEASE MANAGEMENT PROGRAMS

SPECIFIC PROGRAMS FOR HOMECARE PROVIDERS AND HOSPITALS

- Chronic Obstructive Diseases (COPD, Asthma)
- Restrictive Lung Diseases
- CHF
- Sleep Apnea Syndromes

DEFINITION

According to the Disease Management Association of America (DMAA), disease management is "a system of coordinated healthcare interventions and communications for populations with conditions in which patient self-care efforts are significant." Disease management supports the physician or practitioner/patient relationship and plan of care.

GOAL

Disease management programs empower patients to better understand their condition and to take active roles in their overall care.

The goal of a disease management program is to provide the highest level of home care to patients with chronic lung disease and to improve their quality of life.
OBJECTIVES

Patients in a disease management program will be able to:

- improve their quality of life
- experience fewer exacerbations
- have fewer emergency room visits and/or hospitalizations
- have reduced expenditures for medical care
- lead more active and productive lifestyles

RT GAME PLAN

- Become actively involved as case managers in the discharge planning process
- Take on a “coaching” role for home care patients and implement a disease management program (possible home care and hospital cooperation here)
- Offer pulmonary rehab if no program is available
- Support HR 2619 (will allow reimbursement for RTs in a physician’s practice…RRT credential and BS degree will be required. This is a critical first step toward professional recognition)

KEY SELLING POINT

As a result of the ACA passed in 2010, hospitals are being penalized for early readmissions (within 30 days) for patients with CHF, AMI, pneumonia and COPD (beginning 10/1/14). The active involvement of RTs (as case managers, coaches, home care clinicians and rehab specialists) can help to reduce early these readmissions and thereby save the hospital from being penalized.
THE VICIOUS CYCLE

“FREQUENT FLYERS”

HOSPITAL  EXACERBATIONS

HOME

CONTINUITY OF CARE

Seamless care from hospital to home

ROLE OF THE RT IN HOME CARE

- Patient evaluation and testing
- Assist with discharge planning process
- Recommendation of home care therapy and related equipment
- Patient, family and/or caregiver education
- Set-up equipment and deliver prescribed therapy
- Assessment of care provided
- Design and implement disease management program
- Patient follow-up and revision of care plan
PULMONARY REHABILITATION

Major components include:
* education (A&P, pathology of lung diseases, use of home care equipment, nutrition, ADLs, personal hygiene, stress management, etc)
* breathing retraining (pursed-lip, inspiratory resistive and diaphragmatic breathing)
* physical reconditioning (walking, cycling, rowing, use of weights and arm ergometry)
* home regimen monitoring
* assessment for follow-up care

RATIONALE FOR O₂ THERAPY AND PHYSICAL ACTIVITY

PROBLEMS/ISSUES WITH PULMONARY REHAB

- Reimbursement (Medicare recognizes pulmonary rehab but payment is inadequate)
- Personnel (RTs are the most qualified to conduct these programs if they possess the necessary background and education)
- Equipment and space
- Marketing
- Physician buy-in
- Outcomes assessment
POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS

- Use RTs to conduct sessions eliminating the need for other healthcare personnel
- Share space and equipment with cardiac and/or physical rehabilitation (but be careful)
- Remember that pre and post-program assessments (PFTs, ABGs and CPXs) are needed to demonstrate outcomes and can provide additional revenue to cover program costs
- Document, document, document

ROLE OF THE RT IN PULMONARY REHAB

- Design pulmonary rehab program
- Patient evaluation and testing
- Assist with patient selection process
- Assist with marketing program to physicians and the public
- Patient education during sessions
- Conduct exercise sessions
- Patient evaluation and outcomes measurement

DISEASE MANAGEMENT AND REHABILITATION

- Disease management programs in the home and pulmonary rehabilitation are producing favorable patient outcomes
- Additional research and patient studies are needed to substantiate this claim
- Key issues are personnel/equipment resources, program availability and reimbursement
- Home care and healthcare institutions need to work together
SUMMARY

- Lung diseases can be effectively treated and managed
- Patient management strategies with RT involvement is essential
- RTs can assume important roles as clinicians, patient educators, case managers, coaches and pulmonary rehab specialists
- Homecare, disease management and rehabilitation programs produce favorable patient outcomes when properly implemented

May the Force be with you!

THANK YOU FOR YOUR ATTENTION...
ARE THERE ANY QUESTIONS?