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The Value of Home Care

Background:

Over 14 million Americans receive home-care services through Medicare, Medicaid, VA, Tricare, commercial insurance, and private pay each year. These are people of all ages, infirmities, and disabilities. Nearly 2 million skilled nurses, therapists, social workers and home care aides travel over 7 billion miles each year caring for their patients in all kinds of home care settings. The services range from “high touch” personal care to “high tech” services using innovative technologies. All of this is done with high efficiencies, in a cost effective manner and with unrivaled quality. The value of home care is well established and continues to be demonstrated in care delivery innovations every day. Positive clinical outcomes in the care setting of the patient’s choice with cost savings routinely achieved are the hallmarks of home care.

The Value Proposition of Home Health Care

Home health care brings proven cost savings to health care:

- The Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) estimates that home health care in Medicare saves at least \$378 million a year in just the nine states that are part of an innovative program, Home Health Value Based Purchasing (HHVBP), by reducing hospitalizations. If HHVBP were expanded nationwide, Medicare savings from unnecessary hospitalizations would exceed \$2 billion annually;
- The Cleveland Clinic determined that the use of home health services following inpatient care “decreased the hazard of follow-up hospital readmission and death,” and saved Medicare nearly \$6500 per patient over the course of a year.

Home health promotes better patient outcomes:

- Institutional care presents risks of infections, care mix-ups, and adverse clinical outcomes. Medicare data clearly shows that the quality of care in home health services is at a high level and continues to achieve greater excellence every year. Importantly, the patient outcomes in home health are fully transparent and publicly available for all to review through the Medicare program, Home Health Compare.

Home health provides access to the latest therapies and medical technology:

- Home health brings advanced medical therapies, technologies, and patient information into the home setting, at standards comparable to or better than in institutional settings. Electronic medical records, point of care planning, and integrated care team management are standard. Also, clinical technologies frequently available only on an inpatient basis such as remote patient monitoring, telehealth, infusion therapies, ventilator care, and many other clinical technologies are now readily accessible. Home health utilizes cutting edge health technologies to support care coordination and share information with physicians and non-physicians to deliver timely and informed medical care to patients.

Home is the preferred setting for medical care:

- Numerous studies establish that 9 out of 10 people prefer home care over nursing home care. They prefer home care because of the freedom and independence of being able live at and receive care in their own homes, rather than having to be hospitalized or reside in an institutional setting. It is the only true patient-centered care setting.

What Congress should do:

Congress must take all steps necessary to protect and expand access to home health care. Congress should also support actions that continue to fuel the continuing evolution of home health care in emerging innovative care models, eliminate antiquated barriers to effective home health care, and expand the use of home health care as an effective solution to rising health care costs, particularly for patients with chronic care needs and at the end of life.

For More Information: Please Contact NAHC Government Affairs at 202-547-7424