

Demonstrating the value of Hospital at Home programs

OSF and Medically Home-led simulation will give federal lawmakers a first-hand look

Sometimes seeing is believing. That's why [OSF HealthCare](#) and its partner for its Acute Hospital Care at Home program (AHCAH) will provide an in-person demonstration for federal lawmakers to show how acute care, provided at home, is safe, cost-effective and valued by patients.

OSF OnCall Digital Health Chief Medical Officer Dr. Matt Gorman and Chris Manson, vice president for Government Relations for OSF HealthCare will be joined by leaders from partner [Medically Home](#) in visiting with lawmakers May 17-18 to explain the value of the [Hospital Inpatient Services Modernization Act](#) (S.3792/H.R. 7053) which would allow Medicare beneficiaries to receive acute-level health care services in their home for two years beyond the duration of the COVID-19 pandemic health emergency (PHE).

Brandi Clark, vice president of Digital Care for OSF OnCall, says OSF launched an acute care at home pilot in May of 2020 in an effort to ease hospital capacity during the COVID-19 pandemic. Clark says the effort showed hospital-level care can be delivered safely and effectively at home.

"We achieved great outcomes and the patients absolutely loved it. They were able to get the care where they were comfortable in their homes, with the families and their children and their pets around them and we were able to deliver that care at a lower cost while allowing our system to keep those patients in the hospital who really, truly needed to be there."

Clark says extending the waiver that allows for the AHCAH programs will encourage hospitals and health systems to initiate or continue investment in this model of care, knowing it can be sustained with government reimbursements for hospital-level services at home. Clark says OSF leaders are convinced this approach represents the future of lower-cost, patient-centered health care that offers patients everything they would expect during a hospital stay.

"From providing meals to the patients, drawing their labs, even things like X-ray are able to be provided in the patients' home."

OSF HealthCare medical providers were educated on the process to understand the concept that goes beyond traditional home care to offer more extensive services paired with 24/7 monitoring and accessibility.

Dr. Gorman says some acute care at home programs were launched even before the pandemic. Peer-reviewed studies, comparing patients hospitalized at home with those who received brick and mortar care show that patients at home – including those from varying socioeconomic backgrounds – had fewer re-admissions and returns to the emergency department and better patient reported outcomes and satisfaction.

"CMS started a demonstration three years prior to COVID and really showed benefits. What this really showed was people recover faster and have fewer readmissions which is significant; and people just do better at home."

OSF HealthCare and partner Medically Home will set up a simulation of acute care at home with trained actors in a hotel near the nation's capitol building in Washington D.C. Dr. Gorman expects the experience will let lawmakers see first-hand patient care and support delivered through home visits, paired with a 24/7 digital care command center.

"That it is the ICU, it is the maternity ward, it is the general medical bed. For some who are healthy, they may not have been in the hospital for 20 years so they lose touch with it (inpatient care). So this is an opportunity for us to educate our legislators about what today's modern health care is."

The bipartisan bill OSF HealthCare and other hospital systems are backing would require that within one year of enactment, the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) issue regulations establishing health and safety requirements for AHCAH programs. Dr. Gorman says that'll position the entire health care

ecosystem to have policies and procedures in place to be better prepared for the next public health emergency.

“We’re going to be well suited and situated for the next whatever it is - whether it’s another COVID wave or whether it’s another virus - and so that allows us to have more capacity within our health care system which allows us to care for patients safer and more effectively.”

Anyone interested in seeing acute care at home continue beyond the pandemic is encouraged to contact their federal legislators to encourage them to support the Hospital Inpatient Services Modernization Act.