

## Getting to the Heart of the Matter

### *Evaluation Report: Post-Acute Cardiac Rehabilitation Program to Reduce Hospital Readmissions*

#### Background

Launched in 2013, this innovative program was designed to help cardiac patients achieve success with their post-acute treatment regime, something that is especially important for older cardiac patients who are at an increased risk for complications. By “bridging the gap” between when patients are discharged from acute care until they are ready to start out-patient cardiac rehabilitation, the program aims to improve the quality of care and quality of life for older adults recovering from congestive heart failure, myocardial infarction, bypass surgery, and other heart diseases and reduce hospital readmissions.

#### Program Summary

Four main strategies of the program include:

- Quality nursing and medical care, physical, occupational, and speech therapies, and nutrition assessment and support, all following a “care pathway” designed to standardize patient management
- Patient support with evidence-based training to increase self-management of their health
- Spiritual and family support
- Coordination of care throughout the stay and upon discharge to home, including ongoing communication with the patient’s primary care physician and cardiologist.

#### Key Results

The 30-day Readmission Rate for program participants decreased from 25% to 13.5%

The 60-day Readmission Rate for program participants decreased from a range of 28-32% to 23%

Patients increased their Functional Independence Measures (FIM) scores from 10.3 to 14.0

#### Challenges and Learnings

- Training and skill enhancement of staff is valuable and vital to the success of the program; however, turnover brings new staff needing similar training
- Marketing, recruitment, and outreach efforts are essential to enroll appropriate patients to the program
- Overall, patients participating were very satisfied and appreciative of the program

Evaluation completed by Denise D. Quigley and Thomas F. Syltebo, Evaluation and Research Services, September 2015