

## **Aetna Better Health of Illinois Telemonitoring program substantially decreases readmissions, bed days and ED utilization**

### **PROGRAM OVERVIEW:**

Aetna Better Health of Illinois is a managed Medicare-Medicaid plan serving low-income beneficiaries of which a large proportion are members with high degree of morbidity. Care management and care coordination services are necessary to help members manage their conditions and promote proper utilization of services. In an effort to decrease ED/Inpatient use, promote medication adherence, improve member engagement and educate members on self-management of their chronic conditions, Aetna identified telemonitoring as a way to meet the needs of these high-risk chronic members. After initially deploying a Honeywell Hommed solution, Aetna switched to the Carematix remote monitoring platform due to low member satisfaction and non-compliance with Honeywell devices.

### **IMPLEMENTATION APPROACH:**

Aetna used risk stratification models based on claims data to identify high-cost members with COPD, CHF, Asthma, Diabetes, Hypertension and ESRD. These members were given easy-to-use Carematix Remote Patient Monitoring systems. Carematix devices regularly record and transmit biometric data including heart rate, blood pressure, weight, oxygen saturation, peak flow, blood glucose levels and day-to-day well being data. Clinical parameters are set and reviewed by the Aetna telemonitoring staff. Members with abnormal or out-of-parameter readings that generate “red” alerts (level III) are contacted by telemonitoring nurses. Using sound clinical judgement, historical biometric data and knowledge of the members vital sign trends, a nurse will recommend actions for the member and may contact the member’s physician for timely remedial action.

**The utilization decrease** from FY 2013 to FY 2015 are remarkable:

- **64% decrease in admits**
- **79% decrease in bed days**
- **61% decrease in ED visits**

Aetna Better Health is looking into opportunities to expand the Carematix remote monitoring program.

### **OUTCOMES:**

The Program’s attributes have resulted in earlier identification of disease exacerbation and medication management issues, providing an opportunity for early intervention before a hospitalization occurs. In addition, the telemonitoring tools promote patient self-management of chronic conditions, and with physician oversight, can be a key component of helping people age in place.

At the end of FY 2015, there were 158 members actively enrolled in the Telemonitoring Program. More than half of these members (53%) with chronic conditions self-reported improvement in general health status, another third of the members reported the same general health status, and only 10% self-reported a decline in overall health status. Finally, overall utilization decreased across the board and Aetna will be looking at opportunities to expand the Carematix program.

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Aetna Better Health of Illinois

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Mary is a 55 year old female who was enrolled in Telemonitoring on 3/30/2015. When she first came aboard, the member's blood glucose levels were very high reflecting blood glucose levels > 500. At first, the member would avoid calls from the assigned Telemonitoring nurse to the point where the crisis line was activated for a wellness check. Afterwards, the member realized the Telemonitoring nurse was concerned of her well-being. Mary began to work with the Telemonitoring nurse to assist with putting a plan in place to help lower blood glucose levels. The Telemonitoring nurse began to educate the member about Diabetes with topics such as:

1. What is Diabetes?
2. Signs and symptoms of hypo- and hyperglycemia.
3. The complications that could occur as a result of uncontrolled BG levels.

The member mentioned she was on Metformin, which is an oral medication to help lower blood glucose levels. However, this medication was ineffective. Therefore, the Telemonitoring nurse initiated a conference call with the member and Doctor from Family Christian Health Center who immediately scheduled an urgent appointment for the member regarding elevated blood glucose levels. During the appointment, the member was placed on Lantus Insulin and referred to a Diabetes Educator who worked with the member on Insulin administration and diet control. At this present time, the member is very engaged with her health and gives the Telemonitoring nurse a call Monday - Friday to check -in. This has resulted in her proficiency to self-administer insulin appropriately and diet control. At this present time, the members blood glucose levels are hitting results under 200.

A quote from the member: "Theresa, thank you for treating me as a person and not a number.' Thank you for everything; you are a blessing to me."

**Clinical Care Manager/Telemonitoring: Theresa Sykes-Duhart, RN BSN**  
**Date: 8/28/15**

