Community Paramedicine Program

Presentation to the

Nevada Legislative Committee on Health Care

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APRIL 9th, 2014

EXHIBIT N Health Care
Document consists of 30 pages.
 Entire exhibit provided.
Meeting Date 4-09-14
What Community Paramedicine is NOT?

• A replacement for nurses or other health care professionals.

• Another new project to divert money from hospitals, clinics, and home health agencies.

• A change in the scope of practice for any provider.
What is Community Paramedicine?

The use of Community Paramedics in a “non-traditional” manner, within the community in an effort to connect underutilized resources to underserved populations.
What Community Paramedicine Can Offer?

**Expanded Role, Not Expanded Scope**

- Health & Wellness Programs
- Health Screening
- Health Education
- Immunizations
- Monitoring of Diabetic Patients
- Monitoring of Post-MI Patients
- Access to healthcare options
- Risk Assessments
Rural and Underserved Issues

• People in rural and underserved areas face real health disparities. These disparities have a deleterious impact on health status.

• Access to health care is difficult or impossible.

• In rural areas the inability to travel long distances for routine checkups and screenings equates to costly health problems.
Why Community Paramedics?

• Paramedics...
  – Have the skills and knowledge to deliver quality care.
  – Know how to assess resources and make critical decisions.
  – Can fill the gaps in care with expanded skills and education.
What About Home Health?

• Community Paramedicine
  – Physician Led
  – Episodic
  – Capable of providing services to diverse patient populations

• Home Health
  – Model does not make sense (financially) in rural areas.
  – Can ONLY provide care to “home bound patients” as defined by CMS regulations.
Issues Facing Nevada’s Health Care System

• Shortage of Health Professionals
  A recent study by the Nevada Legislative Counsel Bureau found that Nevada had the following rankings:
  – 47th Among the states:
    • In the number of physicians per 100,000 population.
    • In the number of social workers
  – 50th in the number of nurses per 100,000.
Issues Facing Nevada’s Health Care System

- Uninsured residents
- Rapid population growth – in some areas
- Low Medicaid coverage
- Low health status
- Behavioral health issues
Opportunities

• Provide cost effective health navigation to the high utilizers of EMS and health systems.

• Can provide health services for low acuit visits- “The eyes and ears of the physicians”:
  – Vitals signs
  – Blood draws
  – Oxygen saturation checks
  – Wound checks
  – Ear checks.
Opportunities

- Moving away from the emergency only mentality, moving towards a proactive approach to community health and wellness.
- Assist patients that do not qualify for Home Health or Hospice Services receive episodic care in the patient’s residence.
- Visits by Community Paramedics can help patients gain a better understanding of the importance of correct evidenced based disease management (CHF, Asthma, Pneumonia, MI, etc.)
- Assist with larger health promotion and wellness activities.
Opportunities

• Assure that the patients have the ability to properly follow up after hospital discharge.

• Improve the patients willingness to properly follow up with a PCP or specialty physician.

• Allow the patient to ask question and get answers relating to their condition.

• Revisit and provide additional explanation on hospital discharge instructions.
Positive Benefits of a Community Paramedicine Program

• Reducing the number of 911 calls
  – Patients benefit from receiving medical care without having to call 911.

• Reducing Emergency Department visits
  – Decrease non-critical patient transports.
  – Improve field screening capabilities.
  – Referring patients to the appropriate facility.
  – Reducing healthcare costs.
Positive Benefits of a Community Paramedicine Program

• Reducing hospitalizations.
  – Reduction in hospitalizations costs.
  – **Decrease hospital readmissions.** { a paramount goal of the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act of 2010}
    – Promoting health and wellness.

• Reducing the demand on long-term care beds.
  – Providing patients the opportunity to stay at home longer.
  – Patients stay healthier.
Positive Benefits of a Community Paramedicine Program

- A team approach- Medical Home/ACO
  - Greater opportunity for EMS to become an integrated part of the health care continuum.
  - Quality assurance will be monitored by a physician medical director.

- Economic efficiencies in the overall healthcare system.

- EMS may be more cost effective.

- Decrease costs.
Positive Benefits of a Community Paramedicine Program

- Additional career opportunities will be available.
- May help with retention of EMS personnel due to overwork and reduce incidence of burnout.
Positive Benefits of a Community Paramedicine Program

• Care is provided in the home and offers alternatives to ED wait times and overcrowding.

• Treat and refer/release will result in cost savings to patient.

• A new level of professionalism to EMS providers would be available.

• Community Paramedicine would involve mapping of the community and discovering needs that would otherwise go unnoticed.
Flexible

• Allows for...
  – Identification of specific community needs.
  – The structure of programs around communities.
  – Modification of program as needs grow and change.
Resourceful

- Identifies...
  - What is available?
  - What is missing?
  - Where to access resources?
How it Works

1. Identification of a patient that could benefit from the program
2. Referral from PCP
3. CP coordinator contacts the patient to schedule a visit
4. CP provides services in the home that are within current scope of practice
5. CP will communicate with PCP to ensure quality of care and appropriate oversight
Trends in Community Paramedicine Programs

• Current Programs
  – Nova Scotia

• Issues
  – Small population
  – Average age 65+
  – 2+ hours to nearest hospital
  – No local healthcare provider
Trends in Community Paramedicine Programs

- Nova Scotia Community Paramedic Model

- Over a five year period:
  - 40% reduction in Emergency Room visits
  - 28% reduction in clinic visits
Trends in Community Paramedicine Programs

• Current Programs
  – State of Alaska

  • Large remote communities
    – 180 villages
    – > 300,000 patient encounters

• Provide
  – 24-hr emergency care
  – Urgent care
  – Prenatal care
  – Preventative care
  – Chronic care
Community Paramedicine in NV

• REMSA (Reno, NV)
  – Awarded a nearly 10 million dollar CMS innovations grant.
  – Focusing on patient education and disease management relating to chronic health conditions.
  – Alternative transport
  – Partnership with UNR
  – Demonstrating clinical and financial benefits
Community Paramedicine in NV

• Humboldt General Hospital (Winnemucca, NV)
  – 1st CP program in the State
  – All services provided free “It’s the right thing to do”
  – Goal is to increase health and decrease readmission rates
  – Physician extenders
  – Additional patient centered services
Challenges

- Integration and collaboration with other health care professionals - turf
- Funding and reimbursement
- Regulation
- Development of expanded roles
- Education
- Medical direction and program oversight
- Data collection and program evaluation
Legislative Priorities

• Continue the dialogue that started during the 2013 legislative session.

• Work with key stakeholders to develop statutory language (with introduction of a possible BDR) that allows for reimbursement and added statutory protection of providers.

• Assure that any legislation allows for flexibility with regard to the gaps found in any of Nevada's community.

• Allow for these programs to be locally controlled by individual medical directors (physicians).
Questions?
Community Paramedicine Program

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