

Preventing Avoidable Hospital Readmissions

Most of us have had a loved one who had to return to the hospital soon after being discharged. We can identify with the anxiety, unrest and burden felt by all those involved when this occurs.

And it occurs too often. Nearly one in five Medicare patients discharged from hospitals in Minnesota is readmitted within 30 days. Many of these returns to the hospital could be prevented.

ICSI, along with the Minnesota Hospital Association and Stratis Health, combined to launch the RARE (Reducing Avoidable Readmissions Effectively) Campaign. The goal of the RARE Campaign is to prevent 4,000 avoidable readmissions between July 1, 2011 and Dec. 31, 2012. With the average hospital stay of four days, reaching this goal will help 4,000 Minnesotans enjoy 16,000 nights of sleep in their own beds instead of unnecessarily in the hospital.

The RARE Campaign recognizes that returning to the hospital when it could have been prevented is not just a hospital problem. It is the result of poor coordination of patient care as patients move through the health care system. That is why the RARE Campaign focuses on five key areas for improvement:

- A thorough discharge plan
- Managing the patient's medication
- Preparing the patient/family for what to do at discharge and after
- Coordinating care as the patient transitions to their next location
- Improving communications through the patient's transition

The statewide RARE Campaign is supported by more than 70 Community Partners, such as the Minnesota Department of Health, Minnesota Alliance for Patient Safety, health plans, nursing homes and home care associations. To date, the more than 80 Minnesota hospitals that are participating in the campaign have helped prevent 2,607 patients from needlessly returning to the hospital.

This is another example of how ICSI and other collaborators are helping our patients and our communities achieve the goals of improving:

- the health of people in our communities
- the experience patients have when in the health care system
- the affordability of care.

Not only have Minnesotans received higher quality care, they have also gained 10,428 more nights of sleep in their own beds to date. The campaign has also saved an estimated \$30 million, helping to slow the rise in health care costs. ICSI and its partners will continue this campaign into 2013 to prevent patients from needlessly returning to the hospital.