

THE RISING VALUE OF ACUTE CARE IN THE HOME

Today's consumers are expecting alternative care settings that not only match their lifestyles and preferences but also are reflective of growing price sensitivities and fears of exposure to viruses. Though traditionally associated with older adult care, post-surgery recovery and treating chronic illnesses, acute care in the home is on the rise, bringing value to multiple consumer segments and providers. As consumers continue to heavily influence change, acute care in the home could be the most consumer-centric mechanism through which healthcare organizations strategically shift care delivery to attract and retain consumers in a quickly transforming healthcare landscape.

Consumer Benefits of Acute Care in the Home

[Huron's consumer research](#) completed in late 2019 indicates that 35% to 40% of consumers are interested in bringing care into the home, while acknowledging they need to know more about it to assess its true value. Now, consumers' interest in care at home has likely only grown due to their experiences with alternate care settings during the initial months of the coronavirus pandemic.

The direct benefits of acute care in the home for consumers are rooted in the factors that matter most to consumers, including convenience, cost and personalization. Acute care in the home:

- **Increases patient satisfaction and experience.** Huron's research reveals that when consumers receive care, they don't want to feel like they're just another number. Trust, respect from providers and personal attention are all reported drivers of satisfaction. Acute care in the home enables consumers and their care providers to build stronger, more personal relationships in a one-on-one setting. These relationships help consumers feel like an individual, which improves satisfaction and experience.
- **Delivers greater comfort.** Environment directly impacts a patient's recovery and overall health. Acute care in the home allows consumers to receive care in a familiar, comfortable setting where they can sleep in their own beds, wear their own clothes and surround themselves with family and friends. A familiar environment also reduces anxiety and stress. These small dignities and comforts have a significant effect on overall well-being and the success of treatment.
- **Improves quality.** Receiving care in the hospital presents safety concerns for certain types of patients. Delivering hospital-level care in the home for patients with moderate to high acuity levels can reduce mortality rates and readmissions among certain types of patients. Additionally, acute care in the home allows providers to see how patients manage their condition in a real-life setting and evaluate the

nonmedical factors that impact overall health. This enables providers to adjust treatment plans to find the best fit for the patient's lifestyle, preferences and unique circumstances. These adjustments create a more personalized treatment plan specific to the individual, leading to higher quality of outcomes and further satisfying the patient's desire to be viewed as more than just a number.

- **Offers consumers more convenience and peace of mind.** Technology and innovation have made it increasingly convenient for consumers to do anything from learn a new language to order groceries. With in-home technology, advanced analytics and the right care coordination program, the same level of convenience and quality is possible for healthcare consumers. Consumer concerns about the safety of seeking care at a hospital because of the ongoing pandemic could have devastating and unintended effects. Acute care in the home not only provides consumers the convenience they want but also the peace of mind they need in keeping themselves and their loved ones safe and healthy in uncertain times.

Provider and Caregiver Benefits of Acute Care in the Home

Recognizing that consumers want their healthcare to be more accessible and convenient, many healthcare organizations are looking to transform their range of services to provide innovative care in alternative settings. Providing acute care in the home:

- **Increases employee satisfaction.** In traditional care settings, providers don't necessarily get to spend time with patients the way they'd like to. Acute care in the home allows providers to get to know their patients, as well as their families, friends and loved ones. These relationships are more aligned to the people-centric reasons care providers go into the medical field in the first place.
- **Enables hospitals to be more efficient.** One of the top concerns in healthcare today is capacity. Acute care in the home ensures inpatient space is reserved for those patients who truly need it, thus avoiding the many problems which stem from overcrowding.
- **Costs less for providers.** Nothing costs more for providers than inpatient acute care. Acute care in the home offers providers a way to increase capacity without increasing spending. Moreover, virtual inpatient care delivered in the home comes to 20% to 30% less than the cost of providing traditional inpatient care.

Adding Acute Care in the Home as a Service Line

By adding acute care in the home as a service line, healthcare organizations can deliver better care at a lower cost. Here are a few steps for making acute care in the home a reality:

- **Determine where acute care in the home fits into your organization's strategic plan.** Review the organization's long-term goals as well as the mission and vision, and establish how alternate care settings can be used to achieve those ends.
- **Complete an opportunity analysis.** Determine which patient populations will be best served by acute care in the home. Likewise, assess which existing inpatient services make sense to transition to acute care in the home. Lastly, explore current connections to find potential referral sources to grow your network.
- **Conduct a service provider market scan.** Assess internal and external service providers as well as in-house capabilities to provide acute care services outside the hospital.
- **Create the payor and reimbursement strategy.** Negotiate with payors to establish the reimbursement plan for bundled services.
- **Assess the probability of implementation success.** Identify risks that could impact the speed and scale of implementation, such as

cultural and clinical readiness, information technology infrastructure and support, and regulatory and compliance considerations.

Although acute care in the home care is most often associated with a few specific consumer populations, it will soon have widespread appeal as providers and consumers become more familiar with it. By investing in acute care in the home, healthcare organizations and consumers will experience the clinical and financial value of this transformational component of care delivery.



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