



Marshfield Clinic & Saint Joseph's Hospital Improve Quality of Life and Control Costs

Challenge: To improve the quality of life for individuals with congestive heart failure by educating and providing resources to patients to help them better manage their own health.

Target: Patients dealing with congestive heart failure and their families, and the medical staff at Marshfield Clinic and Saint Joseph's Hospital, Marshfield

Solution: There were a number of congestive heart failure patients who could have had better control of their condition with education and management by their physician. Before implementation of the program, patients' quality of life was lower and the cost to treat them was higher, due to increased hospitalizations.

Saint Joseph's Hospital and Marshfield Clinic implemented a program designed to keep patients out of the emergency department. This program involves fluid control, diet and nutrition monitoring, weight management, exercise and an appropriate medication regimen.

Outcome: Within a year re-hospitalizations for heart failure patients in the program dropped by 71 percent and emergency room visits dropped by 53 percent. Results from the program found that each less congestive heart failure hospitalization was a loss in charges averaging \$9,076, while each less emergency room visit was a loss in charges averaging \$983.

At the time a patient joined the program, the average perceived functional status was 45 percent. After involvement in the program for 12 months, the perceived functional status averaged 65 percent.

The program's impact is exemplified by the life of one patient who during the six months prior to joining the program needed to be hospitalized nine times and went to the emergency department two additional times. During this time she was unable to walk to the bathroom without taking a rest at mid-point. After one year in the program, she did not have any hospitalizations or emergency department visits. Still today, she is able to harvest a large garden, clean her house and go to the grocery store. Congestive heart failure is no longer ruling her life.