Discharge Planning/Discharge Assessments

Case managers provide a valuable service for the hospitals when coordinating services for the patient being admitted and leaving the hospital to another setting. Case managers performing discharge planning are licensed staff and include registered nurses, nurse practitioners and social workers. A multidisciplinary planning approach is important to achieve successful coordination of care and the execution of a timely discharge plan. In general, the basics of a CM discharge care plan are:

- **Assessment and evaluation** of the patient by qualified personnel. This includes identifying high risk factors.
- **Discussion** with the patient and/or his representative.
- **Planning** for homecoming or transfer to another care facility.
- **Determining** if caregiver training or other support is needed.
- **Referrals** to home care agency and/or appropriate support organizations in the community.
- **Arranging** for follow-up appointments or tests.

Case managers may use a variety of forms or online system assessment tools to help document the risk factors identified and services needed at the time of discharge. The following factors have been associated with a high risk of readmission. A good assessment will identify these factors:

- Discharge medications: more than six or high-risk specialty drugs.
- Depression associated with a chronic condition.
- Low health literacy.
- Racial and cultural disparities.
- Coronary artery bypass graft and diabetes.
- Heart failure.
- COPD with comorbidities.
- Pneumonia in adults over 65 or those with comorbidities.
- Stroke among those 65 and older.
- Five or more chronic comorbid conditions.
- Prior admission within 30 days.
- Sickle cell anemia.
- Age 60 or older, with comorbidity and history of adverse drug reaction.
- For pediatric patients, risk factors may include NICU discharges, asthma prior to admission, sepsis, congenital heart disease and the medically complex child.

Timely, accurate and factual information between the attending physician and/or hospitalist and the case manager doing discharge planning is extremely critical. You may contact the Case Management Department at any time during your patient’s hospitalization for a discharge planning assessment.