



Navigating COPD Care

It can be difficult to navigate the complex health system of hospitals, insurance coverage and healthcare providers when managing COPD.

In 2014, the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) began an effort to improve quality of care by assessing hospitals and healthcare providers on their ability to reduce hospital readmissions within 30 days after an initial COPD exacerbation admission. According to data, 1 in 5 patients admitted to the hospital with a COPD exacerbation is readmitted within 30 days of discharge.

The following are strategies we recommend for you to better navigate the healthcare system and avoid hospital readmission:

Tips to help you navigate the healthcare system:

1. Work with health system care management, discharge coordinator and family/caregiver liaison or advocate to develop a COPD management plan
2. Don't be afraid to ask questions of healthcare providers (*refer to RHA's Publication, "Making the Most of Your Doctor's Appointment"*)
3. Research healthcare services to ensure they meet your needs
 - a. Know which pulmonary rehabilitation centers are available in your area
 - b. Become familiar with home health companies

- c. Research medical equipment and oxygen companies
 - d. Become familiar with extended care facilities
4. Understand your long-term health insurance

Tips to avoid hospital readmission:

1. Develop a COPD management plan
2. Review medication use and technique with your healthcare providers
3. Create personal reminders on how to use proper medication technique/ medical devices (i.e., nebulizers, inhalers, etc.)
4. Review your hospital discharge plan with family/ caregiver advocate and discharge coordinator
5. Prepare for in-home care following a hospitalization
6. Know what resources are available (for example extended care facilities)

