

Eye On Home Health

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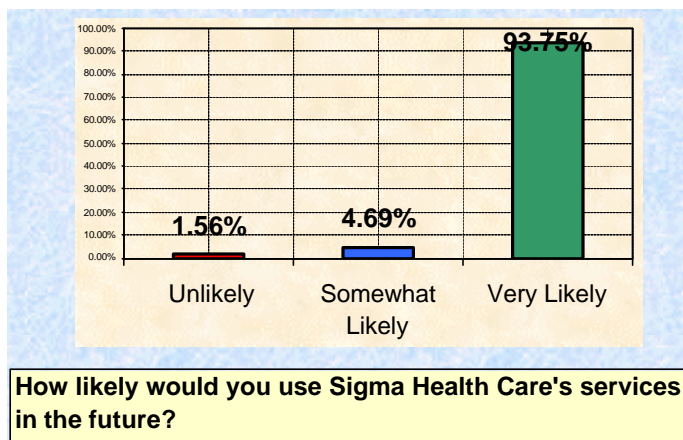
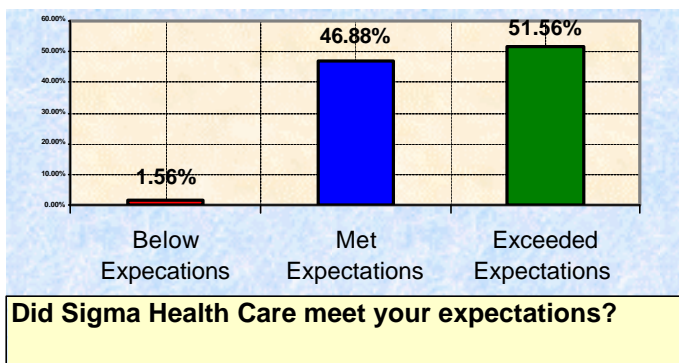
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High patient satisfaction proves success

In order to continue to provide excellent quality care our communities have come to expect, Sigma Health Care conducts ongoing patient satisfaction surveys. The results of these surveys are compared to home health patient satisfaction surveys across the country, providing us with a picture of how we're doing compared to others. The survey results and comparisons help us to identify opportunities for improvement and implement action plans to meet the needs and expectations of our patients. The following are results of Sigma's last

quarterly survey which comes as clear testimony of Sigma's Quality of Care for patients. You can see the complete

results of patient satisfaction survey along with patient testimonials at Sigma's website: www.SigmaHomeHealth.com



Sigma opens a Pasadena office

Expanded service area map on page 4

After opening a Pasadena office, Sigma Health Care has expanded the service area of its operation to areas in southeast and southwest Houston. The agency has recently completed staffing its

south Houston operation with a very highly qualified home health care staff.

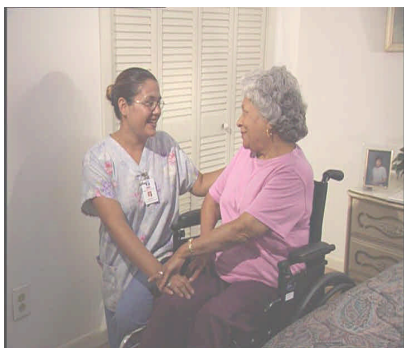
It is expected that Sigma will serve 200-250 elderly patients in South Houston and Pasadena

areas by the end of this year. The new office is located at 3800 Spencer Highway in Pasadena and the phone number is:

713-947-CARE(2273)

The fax number is

281-393-3600



Caring about caregivers while caring for patients

In an effort to ensure that patients' families are getting the help they expect from the home care agency, an extensive home care assessment that covers the needs of a caregiver in relations to caring for the patient must take place. Caregiver assessments are found to be as important as assessing the patient needs. An older wife, for example; will not be able to care for her old husband if she has no means to go to a grocery

store. Assisting her in finding away to get her groceries will help her care more appropriately for her husband.

It is equally important to ensure that the daughter who is caring for her ill mother does not have to leave work every day to help in administering oral medications. The nurse or therapist can be scheduled to do their visits to coincide with the time of taking the medication and save the daughter a trip. Home

health aide visits will be provided to the family along with the skilled needs to assist in bathing, toileting or changing the linens of the patient's bed.

Medical social work services can be available to ensure that the caregiver is not overwhelmed with expenses or emotional stress. The home care team must always work with the family to eliminate any obstacle that may delay treatment.

Skilled nursing services are covered at 100 percent for infusion therapy, while the IV drug itself falls under the DME definition

Medicare coverage for infusion therapy

Nursing services for home infusion visits are completely covered under Medicare part-A when the care is ordered by the physician and the patient meets the criteria for skilled nursing visits. Certain infusion drugs are covered under Medicare part-B. Coverage for drugs is very similar to the Durable Medical Equipment coverage, Medicare usually pays infusion supplies at 80 percent of the approved amount when the patient's condition meets Medicare criteria for each specific diagnosis. The following are the infusion medication approved by Medicare part-B upon meeting

Medicare criteria.

TPN (Total Parental Nutrition) Coverage is based on functional defect, not on the severity of malnutrition.

Enteral nutrition (tube feeding): must be given on a pump, while gravity is ruled out. Patient must have a condition involving the GI tract between the mouth and the duodenum.

Anti-infective agents: All anti-infective agents must be administrated by an external infusion pump. Medicare coverage, is not diagnosis specific. Only Ganciclovir, Amphotericin B and Foscarnet are covered while anti-bacterial therapy is not covered.

Pain management drugs (narcotics) are covered only if prescribed for intractable cancer pain.

Chemotherapy agents:

An external infusion pump must be used and the drug must be infused over at least 8 hours. Various agents are made available by Medicare.

Cardiac insufficiency drugs such as

Dobutamin and Primacore are covered under certain criteria and with proper physician certification.

For more information on the coverage criteria of any infusion drug call Sigma's Pharmacy line toll free at

866-HOME-IVS



Assessment of home safety as basis for care

Home safety evaluation has always been the question of physicians, case managers and social workers as to whether it can be done by the home health staff in a home environment? The short answer to that is (YES), but the answer has to be discussed as to why such safety evaluation is not only important, but in many cases, is the foundation for more appropriate implementation of a plan of care. Whether the patient fall at home or gets her wound infected, many times initial evaluation for safety - if done appropriately - would prevent such adverse outcome. The following are common questions that must be answered in a home safety evaluation.

I. Throughout the interior are several common features, which should be checked for safety.

For example: a) Are scatter rugs firmly anchored with rubber backing? b) Are electrical cords in good repair, especially a heating pad? c) Light, heat and ventilation:

- 1) Is there adequate night lighting?
- 2) Are stairways continually illuminated?
- 3) Is temperature within comfortable range (70-75°F)?
- 4) Is the heater vented properly?
- 5) Is there cross ventilation?
- d) Is furniture sturdy enough to give support?
- e) Is there a minimum of clutter, allowing enough room for easy mobility as well as less fire hazard?
- f) Are emergency telephone numbers posted in a handy place and easily read, such as doctor, fire department, ambulance, paramedics, the home health agency and nearest relative?
- g) If the person has limited vision, does the phone has enlarged dial?

2. The kitchen can be evaluated for the following:
- a) Stove, refrigerator and sink
 - 1) Is the stove free of grease and flammable objects?
 - II. Is baking soda available in case of fire?
 - 3) Is a match used or is there a pilot light?
 - 4) Is the refrigerator working properly?
 - Is the sink draining well?
 - b) Is food being stored properly?
 - c) Is trash taken out daily?
 - d) Is there a sturdy


- stepping stool in evidence?
- e) Are there skid-proof mats on the floor?
- III. In the bathroom, are safety measures observed?
- a) Are handrails beside the tub and toilet?
- b) Are skid-proof mats in the bathtub and/or shower?
- c) Are electrical outlets a safe distance from the tub?
- IV. Outside the home, points to consider include:
- a) Walks and stairs:
- 1) Are there raised or uneven places on the sidewalks?
- 2) Are stairs in good repair?
- 3) Are the top and bottom stairs painted white or a bright contrasting color to improve visibility?
- 4) Are handrails securely fastened?
- c) Are screens on doors and windows in good repair?
- d) Is there an alternate exit for the house?

All of these questions are answered on the visit made by the specialized therapist and action is transformed to the plan of care if appropriate. Involvement of other members of the team such as social workers and nurses will take place



Many times, initial evaluation for safety - if done appropriately - would prevent adverse outcome.



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Rehab Hotline: 866-HOME-REHAB

Galveston

1609 Tremont Street
Galveston, TX 77550

Phone: 409-763-6800
Fax :409-763-2905

Pasadena

3800-P Spencer Hwy
Pasadena, TX 77504

Phone :713-947-CARE(2273)
Fax: 281-393-3600

Email: info@SigmaHomeHealth.com



WE ARE ON THE WEB
WWW.SIGMAHOMEHEALTH.COM

Enhancing the quality of home care

Sigma's employees share profit

In appreciation of its employees, the Sigma Health Care board of directors has introduced a profit sharing plan in its comprehensive benefit package. Employees also have a 401K retirement plan. "Only 40 percent of small businesses nationwide offer any kind of retirement plan for their employees," said Laila Taha, Sigma's chief financial officer. "And very few are in the home health industry." According to Taha, Sigma is the only home health agency in the area known to have both a retirement plan and a profit sharing plan for its employees. "We are not only changing home health care practices at the technical levels, but also our staff's satisfaction levels," she added.



Sigma

Home Health Services

Skilled Nursing

Post Surgery
Cardiac Care
Geriatric Care
Medication Teaching
Diabetic Care
Renal Care
Respiratory Care
Laboratory Services
Nutrition Assessment
Any other care that cannot be performed safely by a non medical person

Rehabilitation Therapy

Physical Therapy
Occupational Therapy
Speech Therapy
Medical Social Work
Home Health Aides

Home Infusion

Total Parental Nutrition
Enteral Nutrition
Anti-infective Therapy
Biologicals

Some Sigma benchmarks and patient profile



Category	Sigma	National average
Average patients' age	77.13	75.20
Medicare patients	99.43%	92.87%
Patients lives alone	31.63%	28.48%
Good rehab prognosis	91.19%***	74.31%
Recovery prognosis	96.72%***	89.62%
Patients with rehab needs	34.33%	27.29%
Cardiac and PVD patients	35.60%	32.57%
Diabetic patients	13.05%	10.07%
Fractures	10.50%	8.80%

This data represent categories provided by the Center for Medicare and Medicaid, CASPER© report.