

RESEARCH BRIEFING

“Current Practices of Family Caregiver Training during Home Health”

HIGHLIGHTS

- ▶ Clinicians support need for family caregiver training to create safer environments for patients
- ▶ Need for more accessible materials from agencies to improve caregiver training process for clinicians
- ▶ Reassessment of caregiver progress as part of the training was a critical tool in adjustment to care plan

▲ OVERVIEW OF RESEARCH

Beginning in 2018, Medicare-certified home health agencies are now required to offer family caregiver training. We conducted qualitative research relying on semi-structured key informant interviews with Registered Nurses (RNs) (n=11) and Physical Therapists (PTs) (n=8) from four diverse home health agencies. Interviews focused on current practices of family caregiver training in the home health setting and were audio-recorded, transcribed, and analyzed by our interdisciplinary research team using directed content analysis to identify relevant themes and concepts.

▲ RESULTS

Clinicians endorsed teaching/training family caregivers as an integral part of their role and viewed this training as helping to create a safer home environment for the patient by better preparing the caregiver. Clinicians' descriptions of providing family caregiver training revealed a dynamic and cyclical process, divided into four major phases: Initial Assessment, Education, Reassessment, and Adjustment. During *initial assessment*, clinicians gathered information (via objective and subjective methods) regarding caregivers' training needs. They then provided *education* to address the most pressing training needs, largely using demonstration and teach-back. *Reassessment* was ongoing throughout the episode as clinicians evaluated caregiver progress. In response to progress, or lack thereof, clinicians performed *adjustment* to the care plan, including changes in education, visit frequency, and involved disciplines.

▲ IMPACT FOR HOME HEALTH CARE

Findings support the importance of family caregiver training to home health outcomes of interest to both individual agencies and major payers like Medicare; for example, this work suggests that the success of family caregiver training affects discharge timing and the number of visits provided. Clinicians described relying on informal, holistic assessments of caregiver needs and, facing a lack of structured materials,

compiling their own individual resource libraries. Agencies could better support their clinicians by offering easily accessible, streamlined materials to

facilitate clinician efforts to understand and meet caregivers' training needs.

WHERE TO READ MORE

Burgdorf JG, Arbaje AI, Chase J-A, Wolff JL. Current practices of family caregiver training during home health care: A qualitative study. *J Am Geriatr Soc.* 2022;70(1):218-227. Doi:10.1111/jgs.17492

ABOUT THE GRANT

The Research Institute's Home Health Research grant is the only grant dedicated solely to the betterment and understanding of care in the home. With more than a decade of sponsoring and providing integral education and research on the value of home health care to the U.S. health care system, the Institute, through the grant process, seeks to bring home health care research to the forefront and sow the seeds for critical research in the field that will help inform better care for patients now and for the future.

ABOUT THE INSTITUTE

The Research Institute for Home is a 501(c)(3) non-profit, national consortium of home care providers and organizations foundation focused on improving access to and delivery care in the home. The Institute invests in research and education about home care and its ability to deliver quality, cost-effective, patient-centered care across the care continuum. The Institute is committed to conducting and sponsoring research and initiatives that demonstrate and enhance the value proposition that home care has to offer patients and the entire U.S. health care system.

RESEARCHERS

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