



IMPROVING PATIENT OUTCOMES AND PROVIDER EFFICIENCY WITH EASY TO USE AND AFFORDABLE REMOTE PATIENT MONITORING



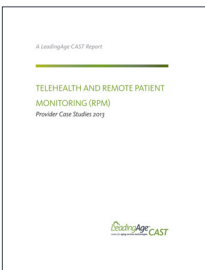
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Impacts and Benefits of Telehealth and Remote Patient Monitoring (RPM) in:

- Health Outcomes (Blood Pressure, Blood Glucose, etc.)
- Staff Efficiencies
- Quality of Life/Satisfaction with Care

Organization Type

EnJOY Life! Health Consulting, LLC provides patient health monitoring, diabetes education, weight management, case management, healthy lifestyle education, management, and coaching.

Other Partners

None.

Organization Description

Joy Pape, president of EnJOY Life! Health Consulting, LLC is a certified diabetes educator, case manager, and care coordinator.

Project Description

Joy Pape, RN, BSN, CDE, WOCN, CFCN, FAADE, is an internationally known certified diabetes educator (CDE) and president of EnJOY Life! Health Consulting, LLC. She has been working with people who have diabetes for over 30 years. She chose to evaluate the Ambio Health wireless remote health and activity monitoring system to see if Ambio was accurate, timely, and easy to use. She also wanted to evaluate if it helped her patients manage their diabetes, and save time for her, as the health care provider.

Telehealth and RPM System Type

EnJOY Life! Health Consulting, LLC used a store-and-forward biometric RPM product from Ambio Health.

Telehealth and RPM System Embodiment

The system chosen was a single-user/patient home base unit.

Business Model

EnJOY Life! Health Consulting, LLC accepts private pay.

Implementation Approach

Patients who have diabetes were invited to partake in a pilot project in which they were given a blood glucose meter, blood glucose strips, and the supporting equipment needed to wirelessly send their blood glucose readings to Ms. Pape. Some patients were also provided with a blood pressure monitor.

Using the Ambio Health system, Ms. Pape provided the same diabetes education and coaching she had provided prior to using the Ambio Health system. She found the Ambio Health system to be accurate and easy-to-use, and that it saved time for both her and her patients, who most importantly, saw improvements in their diabetes management.

Outcomes

As a health care provider, Ms. Pape found the system to be a time-saver because it was much easier to obtain her patients' blood glucose and blood pressure readings in one place, in a format that allowed her to educate them. She also liked the fact that she could receive the information when she chose to. She could get it at the time her patients checked, or she could get it prior to their health care appointments.

The patients reported that they found it surprisingly easy to use; much easier than keeping a log of their own, or even downloading readings from meters. One patient commented, "The Ambio setup is pretty slick. Hard to believe everything worked the first time I set it up with no help required. I'm impressed!"

Telehealth in Use

Case 1

William is a 62-year-old man, who had a stroke three years ago. He has type 2 diabetes, high blood pressure, and a family that loves him. Before using the Ambio Health system, he and Ms. Pape talked weekly. He wasn't writing down his blood sugar levels, and he would have to read off every number to Ms. Pape. She was never sure they were correct, and it took a long time to go through them. William was not even checking his blood pressure. Once on the Ambio Health system, Ms. Pape received his blood sugar and blood pressure results automatically. The numbers were all high. The Ambio Health system provided a record of all the readings. She then shared them with his physicians. Medication changes were made immediately.

One important point here is that William's blood pressure was only high in the morning, which is the most dangerous time for high blood pressure. A lot of people miss that number if they don't check at home. William's early morning blood pressure is now in his target range. Bringing William's numbers to target range in a timely manner can help him prevent another stroke. He looks forward to his son's wedding this fall. He, his loved ones, and his health care providers are amazed at the simplicity of this device and how William's health monitoring has been improved.

Case 2

John, a 35-year-old man, was recently diagnosed with type 1 diabetes. He was told to check his blood sugar at least four times a day. He was scared of his numbers going too high and having complications of diabetes. Ms. Pape was concerned about his numbers going too low. It is not unusual for people who have type 1 diabetes to need a larger amount of insulin early on, but then need less as their condition stabilizes, and early after diagnosis and initiation of insulin treatment (known as the honeymoon period). Although high blood sugar levels can be dangerous in the short-term, it is the long-term high blood sugar levels that can cause a problem. On the other hand, low blood sugar levels can cause more immediate problems, and even death. When they met, Ms. Pape introduced John to the Ambio Health system. Ms. Pape started receiving his numbers right away. She communicated these to his physician who advised him to decrease his insulin. The Ambio Health system allowed him to prevent any seriously low blood sugar levels. He has been amazed by how easy it is to use, and how it has given him and his family a feeling of safety. His numbers have stayed within his target range since starting with the Ambio Health system.

Case 3

Susan, a 60-year-old patient who has pre-diabetes, thyroid problems and allergies, started using the Ambio Health system. Since she had not been told she actually had diabetes or high blood pressure, she wasn't checking her blood sugar or blood pressure. She was aware that too much thyroid and/or allergy medicine could raise her blood pressure. Once on Ambio, she was able to track that her numbers were rising. She immediately contacted her health care provider. Together they worked on changing some of her medications. That worked to keep her feeling good and her numbers in their target range.

Case 4

Tom, a 45-year-old patient who has type 2 diabetes and high blood pressure had a hemoglobin A1C of 11.5% (normal < 7%) when he contacted Ms. Pape. He agreed to enroll in the Ambio Health pilot program. Ms. Pape received his readings daily. In the three months since he has been using the Ambio Health system, his A1C has remained around 5.9%, illustrating the benefit of tracking his readings via telehealth.

Challenges and Pitfalls to Avoid

Ms. Pape had a good experience with the Ambio Health system. She reported that her only challenge was to decide how often she needed to communicate with her patients, since their conditions could change. For example, when someone is newly diagnosed with type 1 diabetes or begins using an insulin pump, they need frequent communication to evaluate present therapy and make changes in a timely manner. Once the blood glucose readings are in target range, they will not need to communicate as often. She understood blood glucose numbers change and may need to be re-evaluated at any time. To avoid pitfalls, Ms. Pape suggested taking this into consideration when setting up schedules, always allowing for some flexibility. She also recommended being very clear with patients about expectations. For example, she recommended setting up a schedule with patients for times to communicate. “Let them know from the beginning that this is not an emergency service. Let them know you are not available to evaluate their readings 24/7. If they think they need to talk with someone outside of scheduled times, have a back-up plan. For example, tell them early on they are to communicate with their health care provider as they always have. If they feel there is an emergency, call 911.”

Lessons Learned

Ms. Pape had known that most patients were hesitant to keep records, and many times don't even bring their meters to appointments. She was looking for a system that was

more simple, reliable and affordable for both her and her patients than those she had used in the past. She found these qualities in the Ambio Health system. She said, “Ambio has changed the way I practice. I now have the numbers available when I communicate with my patients on the phone, by email, or in person. It has made me much more efficient by spending the time communicating with my patient to help them evaluate their numbers, set goals, and make the treatment changes needed to help them better manage their diabetes. And, it is affordable for most people...the most affordable I am aware of.”

Advice to Share with Others

When Ms. Pape made the decision to pilot the Ambio Health system, she was concerned it would be difficult for some of her patients to use and that there would be other technical problems, based on her past telehealth experience. The problems included patients not being able to set up the equipment themselves, patients needing to manually send their data to her themselves, all in-home products needing to be in one room, and the scheduling and wait time for the technology company to make home visits to fix the equipment, which happened often. She found none of these issues with the Ambio Health system. Everyone was able to set up the Ambio Health system at home on their own. “The only technical needs thus far have been to replace a battery, which hasn't been a problem. As a health care provider, I am working towards recommending this simple tool to all of my patients. It's a relief for all of us: health care providers, caregivers, and most importantly the patient,” said Pape.

LeadingAge Center for Aging Services Technologies:

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