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**COLLABORATIVE PARTNERSHIP EXPANDS SERVICE OFFERING AND REDUCES HOSPITALIZATIONS**

*Category:* Hospitalization and Hospital Readmissions

**Organization(s) Name**

Evangelical Homes of Michigan (EHM), Farmington, Michigan

Ohio Presbyterian Retirement Services (OPRS), Columbus, Ohio

**Organization Type**

Diverse Long-Term and Post-Acute Care Provider Organizations

**Organization Description**

Founded in 1879, Evangelical Homes of Michigan (EHM) is a not-for-profit health and human service organization that provides healthcare, housing and community services to older adults and their families in Hillsdale, Lenawee, Macomb, Monroe, Oakland, Washtenaw, and Wayne Counties in southeast Michigan. Today, EHM is one of the largest nonprofits of its kind in metro Detroit and one of the oldest in the state, serving more than 4500 older adults and their extended families annually. It remains grounded in tradition to care for the underserved and has provided \$11.5 million in charitable care over the past five years. In 2010 EHM launched LifeChoice Solutions®, Inc., a subsidiary focused on technology and innovative care solutions for home based clients. Today, LifeChoice Solutions® serves over 650 individuals who remain in their own home.

OPRS is headquartered in Columbus and serves more than 73,000 people annually through its wholly owned subsidiaries OPRS Communities and Senior Independence. OPRS Communities operates 12 retirement communities. Senior Independence Home Health & Hospice provides home and community based services, operates 10 adult day centers and manages six senior centers, in partnership with local governments. In addition, Senior Independence services are extended nationwide through its iPartners.

**Project Description**

The launch of the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act (ACA) in 2010 has created a heightened urgency for healthcare providers to join together in order to meet the needs of a selected cohort of individuals in new and varied ways. A byproduct of the ACA is that healthcare service providers, home health care agencies, hospice care providers, as well as technology and solutions providers are creating unique relationships in order to provide a variety of solutions for adults living in their own home. More importantly, there is now a compelling

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argument that these joint partnerships in the future need to address the government's cry for "more for less".

In July 2013, EHM learned during a conversation with a senior service provider located across the Michigan border in Ohio, that the organization was actively working with a newly formed physician based accountable care organization (ACO), known as Northwest Ohio ACO. Ongoing conversations occurred over the next several months with all parties to determine whether there was a market advantage and an improved outcome story for the newly formed accountable care organization and, likewise, for the two not-for-profit organizations. The Ohio based ACO desired to serve its clients both in Ohio as well as in Michigan; and, the only way to provide this two-state access across the border into Michigan was to establish a "conduit relationship" with a certified home care and solutions provider, one which was Medicare certified and licensed to provide home health care services in Michigan. The federal moratorium for Medicare home health care agencies desiring to open a new start up home health care agency prevented either of the Ohio partners from developing a new home health care agency in Michigan.

Evangelical Homes of Michigan, through its wholly owned subsidiaries of Shared Services Home Health Care (certified home health care), Shared Care Services (private duty home care and geriatric case management services), and EHM's LifeChoice Solutions® (a technology, solutions, and home adaptation company) was a key complimentary partner for Ohio Presbyterian Retirement Services and its home care and hospice subsidiary, Senior Independence and the newly formed physician based ACO in Ohio.

The combined services available to the covered lives or patients in the service area defined in Michigan created a unique value proposition that would allow for the two providers to offer the full array of services to clients in both Michigan and Ohio and allows for a one stop, one phone call relationship for the client and the physician owned accountable care organization.

### **Evangelical Homes of Michigan**

- Medicare Home Health Care Services in Michigan
- Private Duty Home Care Services (Michigan)
- LifeChoice Solutions® Technology and Adaptation Services (Michigan and Ohio)
- Safe at Home service program for clients needing charitable solutions in order to remain at home (Michigan and Ohio)

### **Ohio Presbyterian Retirement Services**

- Medicare Home Health Care Services in Ohio
- Hospice and Palliative Care Services (Ohio)
- Home to Stay service program for non-home health care patient referrals with high risk for rehospitalization (Ohio and Michigan)

### **Implementation Approach**

After months of deliberation, in August 2014, EHM and OPRS formed a joint partner agreement through the creation of a special *Class B Stock arrangement* within the not-for-profit stock corporation of EHM's Shared Services Home Health Care. The new branch, located in Monroe, Michigan (on the Michigan/Ohio border) was launched to serve patients/clients in three (3) underserved counties in Michigan (Monroe, Lenawee, and Hillsdale Counties) where the ACO was concerned about risk profiles and the possible negative financial impacts due to hospital re-admissions post 30 and 60 day hospital discharge.

The home health care provider remains Evangelical Homes of Michigan's Shared Services Home Health Care and *only* the Monroe branch operation constitutes a joint ownership arrangement where EHM remains the controlling partner and owner of the business; but OPRS has made a collaborative operational and financial commitment to the new arrangement designed to serve Michigan clients living in counties that physically lie nearer to the Ohio border.

This third branch (Monroe) of EHM's Shared Services Home Health Care subsidiary opened in mid-October and is currently outpacing its business projections for the joint arrangement. The Monroe office (one of three offices for home and community-based services for EHM) offers the array of home care services and solutions (business lines), some of which are separately owned by either OPRS or EHM. Shared Services Home Health Care (EHM) is the umbrella agency by which all of the other services are filtered. Projections call for a growth projection of a client base of 100 in the subsequent twelve (12) months.

Most importantly, this joint partnership agreement answers the question raised by the federal government in terms of how are we (providers and healthcare partners) going to begin to address the concept of "more for less" by combining the service strengths of two vastly different and equally similar not-for-profits.

Over the past ten years, Evangelical Homes of Michigan (EHM) and Ohio Presbyterian Retirement Services (OPRS) have worked individually within their respective organizations to create innovative solutions that provide an array of unique service enhancements. OPRS utilizes

a client discharge medical record communication system between its referring hospitals and OPRS called Premedex™ in order to operationalize its *Home to Stay* program. In addition, EHM throughout is HCBS subsidiaries offers numerous technology solutions to its clients that allow for real time connectivity and needs assessments for individuals who live in their own homes. LivWell Health™ through Evangelical Homes of Michigan allows clients to communicate with EHM's care team and wellness coaches in order to determine the clients' daily health status. The platform also allows clients to request services such as transportation, housekeeping and home maintenance services; as well as fitness specialists, nutritional counselors, massage therapists and even chef prepared meals delivered to the clients' home. EHM is also a local distributor for the Phillips® Lifeline product as well as other fall prevention products including a GPS fall monitoring system that links to a contact's smart phone. Finally, Evangelical Homes of Michigan is also working with Care Innovations™ to offer telehealth monitoring for the home health care clients served in the joint partnership Monroe branch to address optimal clinical pathways for those with fragile, chronic diseases such as CHF, COPD and chronic pain.

### **Outcomes**

To date, client satisfaction exceeds the joint partners' expectations and hospital readmissions in the 30 days post hospital discharge are ranging between 3% and 6%. The array of technology supports and services provided by EHM and the unique phone support program for non-home health care referrals to the home have played a factor in decreasing post-acute lengths of stay in Medicare home health care episodes. To date the new branch has had no transfers to the emergency room as a result of a fall in the home since it opened in October.

### **Advantages to the Approach**

The approach leverages capabilities of numerous technology solutions. The collaborative partnership between Evangelical Homes of Michigan and Ohio Presbyterian Retirement Services demonstrates an impact far beyond the expansion into the three counties that the

new agreement serves. The partnership was intentionally designed to improve health outcomes in post hospital discharged clients by providing home care services and technology supports; thereby decreasing the risk for re-hospitalizations and possibly preventing emergency transfers.

The partnership between EHM and OPRS creates a value proposition that boasts a unique collaborative between a physician based accountable care organization, several acute hospital systems, and two not-for-profit long-term and post-acute care providers (EHM and OPRS). Most importantly, this collaboration focuses on the client and therefore, creates a person-centered care network that embraces quality and value for all involved.

### **Challenges and Pitfalls to Avoid**

Existing structures and legal barriers can get in the way of any partnership, but by working with organizational experts you can find innovative ways in which to structure a new partnership.

### **Lessons Learned**

With the right partnerships in place, synergies help create a broad reaching impact that is indeed greater than the impact of each individual organization in the partnership.

### **Advice to Share with Others**

- Explore partnerships with other like-minded organizations, including ACOs, Hospitals and other Long Term Care and Post-Acute Care provider organizations.
- Consider organizations that offer complementary and diverse services.
- Partnership with a payer or an organization that can offer financial incentives, like ACOs, is key to creating a sustainable model.
- Explore technology solutions that can add value to your service delivery model and support your new partnership.

### **LeadingAge Center for Aging Services Technologies:**

The LeadingAge Center for Aging Services Technologies (CAST) is focused on accelerating the development, evaluation and adoption of emerging technologies that will transform the aging experience. As an international coalition of more than 400 technology companies, aging-services organizations, businesses, research universities and government representatives, CAST works under the auspices of LeadingAge, an association of 6,000 not-for-profit organizations dedicated to expanding the world of possibilities for aging. For more information, please visit [LeadingAge.org/CAST](http://LeadingAge.org/CAST)