

The Wellness Tradition

A Quarterly Publication of the Community Health Challenge

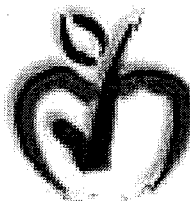
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An Eighteen-Year Tradition of Wellness

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Emed Health Provides Disease Management Services

Emed Health, a division of the nonprofit Center for Emergency Medicine of Western Pennsylvania, Inc., is developing and piloting programs in disease management for asthma, diabetes, congestive heart failure, coronary artery disease, and chronic obstructive pulmonary disease.



Emed Health

Did you know that more than 75% of all health care costs are related to chronic diseases? A chronic disease is defined as a health care problem that lasts at least one year, limits the lifestyle of the person affected and/ or requires continuing medical care. More than 125 million Americans have at least one chronic disease. By the year 2020 the costs of managing these conditions are estimated to reach \$1.07 trillion. Many people equate chronic diseases with aging, but people of all ages, genders and demographics suffer from chronic diseases. Many people with chronic diseases do not have the information or tools they need to manage their disease at home and often resort to treatment in the emergency department.

Emed Health utilizes a unique model for community and home-based prevention and chronic disease management programs by subcontracting with EMS (emergency medical service) agencies to deliver all services. These programs help contain health care costs and provide a needed health care service to the patient. EMS agencies also benefit by adding a source of revenue to their budget and providing alternative job opportunities to EMS providers, which may help reduce stress and lower injury rates.

Health Advocates contracted by Emed Health go into the homes of patients and teach them disease self-management techniques and provide community-based prevention services, such as flu vaccines, health screenings and fall prevention. EMS providers are ideally suited for this role because they are well-integrated into the community and are often familiar with the situations and environments of people in their communities. In addition, Emed Health uses the excess EMS system capacity, and existing EMS infrastructure, malpractice insurance and workman's compensation to minimize overhead costs. Emed Health provides the contracts with the 3rd party payers (mostly insurers and hospitals) for these services, develops the programs, coordinates the service delivery, analyzes the outcomes and data, and institutes the quality assurance programs.

In the past year, Emed Health screened over 16,000 people for diabetes, high cholesterol, obesity, and high blood pressure, enrolled 44 uninsured or Medicaid patients in an asthma disease management program, gave more than 10,000 flu vaccines and began a study on diabetes prevention for police, fire and EMS providers and their family members who are at high risk for developing diabetes. In the future, Emed Health will develop a greater breadth of disease management services since the potential impact on the community, patients and the health care system is great.

CHC is pleased to support the efforts of Emed Health to provide disease self-management tools for people in our communities. For more information, call CHC at 724-283-9955 or Emed Health directly at 724-344-9512.