



Supporting Outpatient Quality Improvement

The American Heart Association's Position

- Many cardiovascular-related deaths can be avoided through better application of clinical guidelines related to primary and secondary prevention or disease management.
- The processes for outpatient care must consistently and systematically produce the best care.
- Outpatient quality improvement should be centered on increasing access and efficiency and ensuring patient-provider continuity to improve patient satisfaction and outcomes.
- Outpatient care must be customized and reflect patient needs, values, and interests.
- Effective and efficient mechanisms and infrastructure to coordinate care across sites, specialties, conditions and time must be in place.
- Care teams must consider the use of evidence-based remote patient monitoring technologies to continue to effectively monitor and treat cardiovascular disease patients in the post-discharge setting.
- EHRs that are fully interoperable, HIPAA-compliant, and designed for the outpatient setting must be used whenever possible to facilitate care coordination in the outpatient setting.
- Patient safety and privacy must be of the utmost priority at all points in the continuum of care.
- To ensure effective transitions of care and a higher likelihood of medication and protocol adherence, knowledge and information must be freely shared between and among patients, care partners, and care teams, which should include applicable friends or family members.
- The AHA has partnered with The Joint Commission to create a joint accreditation award for hospitals deliver integrated, coordinated and patient-centered cardiac care and communications, from the emergency department visit to diagnosis, treatment and follow-up, and through outpatient care.

Fast Facts:

1. Outpatient visits numbered nearly 1 billion in 2015 and are projected to grow by more than 20% by 2019.^{1,2}
2. Utilization rates for inpatient services have declined by as much as 10 – 15% in some states in recent years.³
3. Many complex procedures and surgeries are now available in the outpatient setting due to new technologies and pain control techniques.⁴
4. The use of telehealth technologies has the potential to enhance outpatient care, reduce costs, and improve clinical workflows.⁵
5. Enhanced outpatient care can increase medication adherence rates among older heart attack patients.⁶

For more information and resources from the American Heart Association's policy research department on stroke registries please visit: <https://www.heart.org/en/about-us/policy-research>.

¹ Rui, P., Hing, E., & Okeyode, T. (2018). National ambulatory medical care survey: 2014 state and national summary tables.

² Hiten Patel. "Forecasting the Demand for Hospital Services: Evaluating the Impact of Near Universal Coverage Expansion." 2010. The Advisory Board Company.

³ "Decline In Utilization Rates Signals A Change In The Inpatient Business Model," Health Affairs Blog, March 8, 2013. DOI: 10.1377/hblog20130308029038

⁴ Tsui C, et al. Minimally invasive surgery: national trends in adoption and future directions for hospital strategy. *Surg Endosc*, 2013 Jul; 27(7):2253-7.

⁵ Kvedar J, Coye MJ and Everett W. Connected health: a review of technologies and strategies to improve patient care with telemedicine and telehealth. *Health Aff (Millwood)*. 2014;33:194-9.

⁶ Faridi KF, et al. Timing of First Postdischarge Follow-up and Medication Adherence After Acute Myocardial Infarction. *JAMA Cardiol*. 2016;1(2):147-155. doi:10.1001/jamacardio.2016.0001