



April 17, 2020

Dear Tufts Medical Center and Floating Hospital Community:

Long before the coronavirus COVID-19 began infiltrating our neighborhoods and disrupting our way of life, Tufts Medical Center began researching innovative ways to provide care for the subset of patients who could receive medical services in the comfort of their own homes. Bringing the necessary caregivers, equipment and therapies to a patient's home not only makes health care delivery less stressful and more convenient for the patient, it allows them to be discharged from the hospital sooner, freeing up valuable bed space so we can evaluate and care for more sick people.

In our quest to move to this innovative model, we have implemented a partnership with Medically Home, a Boston, Massachusetts company that has a strong track record in successfully enabling hospital-level care in patients' homes. We're now ramping up the program and are the first Medical Center in the country to use this medical intervention as part of our COVID-19 response – releasing patients from our inpatient units early to continue treatment and recovery at home with the help of the Medically Home team.

So far, the response from patients and families has been nothing but positive. On Monday, we received a wonderful message from a patient's family member about the care her father received while under the care of Medically Home. She wrote, "So impressed with all of you – every nurse, doctor, NP, and other team member involved in his care has been amazing. You are all kind, and just amazing, and I really wanted you all to know that we really appreciate you."

Medically Home sets up a virtual hospital at home, complete with the technology, telemedicine, clinician's and clinical services providing 24/7 communication and monitoring to deliver hospital-level care. Clinicians make in-person visits, along with on-demand video communication, allowing patients and family members to access their team anytime, day or night. The core services patients would receive in a hospital they now receive in their homes. These services include medications, lab tests, mobile imaging and ultrasounds, IV therapies and durable medical equipment. Medically Home enables the care of complex patients with conditions such as heart failure, COPD, pneumonia and cellulitis that would normally need an inpatient admission.

This [Commonwealth Fund case study](#) offers additional insights into the Hospital at Home model and shares compelling research showing that compared to similar hospitalized patients, Hospital at Home patients experience better clinical outcomes, including fewer readmissions, reduced falls and lower rates of mortality. Patients and families also report improved satisfaction and reduced caregiver stress..

I'd like to extend a special thanks to members of the Tufts MC team who offered their time and expertise to accelerate this program. We could not be prouder to be part of this new collaboration, which could transform our industry. This partnership will allow us to optimize our space and resources at the hospital while setting up the technology and a care team tailored to meet the unique needs of each patient, in a place that will help those who are recovering heal best mentally and physically – their own homes.

Please read more about [Medically Home here](#) and on the attached FAQ sheet. I'll provide an update on the progress of this program as we move forward.

Michael Apkon, MD PhD
President & CEO

Tufts Medical Center & Floating Hospital for Children



Tufts Medical Center with Medically Home

FAQ for Referring MDs

4/16/2020

BACKGROUND

What is Medically Home?

The Medically Home Program provides temporary hospital-level care in the home setting for qualified patients in certain areas of Massachusetts.

Why is Tufts Medical Center partnering with Medically Home?

Medically Home, under the leadership of Chief Medical Officer, Dr. Eliza Shulman, has three years of experience delivering high-quality, hospital-level care in the home. Some physicians may already be familiar with the program through its partnership with Medicare Preferred. Separately, Tufts Medical Center has been in conversations with Medically Home for several months with the goal of providing a safe option for patients to receive care in the comfort of their own homes. We have now accelerated our timeline with Medically Home to create more opportunity for care to be delivered outside of the hospital setting and free up space that may be needed to treat patients with COVID-19 who require in-hospital care.

What services can be provided in the home?

Medically Home provides services patients would normally receive in a hospital, including:

- 24/7 virtual physician and nursing oversight
- Remote vital signs monitoring
- Mobile imaging
- Laboratory services
- Pharmacy/medication management, including IV infusion services
- Supplemental oxygen and nebulizer treatments
- Specialty consultations
- Physical and occupational therapy
- Targeted, individualized patient education
- Meals and nutritional support

Please note that many diagnostic procedures, such as x-rays, ultrasounds and echocardiograms can be performed in home, while some, for example, advanced imaging and colonoscopies cannot. Likewise, many therapeutics – intravenous fluids and medications, supplemental oxygen and nebulizer treatments can be administered in home, but others, like blood transfusions and central line placement still require in-hospital care.

What kind of conditions can be treated under the Medically Home model?

Medically Home enables care that would normally be delivered with an inpatient admission for complex patients with several conditions, including, but not limited to:

- Heart Failure
- COPD
- Asthma
- Pneumonia
- Cellulitis/Soft Tissue Infections
- Complicated UTI/Lonephritis
- Gastroenteritis/Dehydration

Please note that patients who have tested positive for COVID-19 are currently not considered eligible for the Medically Home program.

How is eligibility for hospital at home care determined?

Tufts Medical Center has a team of doctors and case managers that evaluates and recommends patients who can safely and effectively receive care in the home. Patients can be recommended from the inpatient setting (Patients must be admitted to inpatient level services, those on observation are not eligible.) or from the Emergency Department. The Tufts Medical Center team first identifies eligible patients based on their diagnosis, then screens each patient and their home environment to ensure that clinical needs can be safely met in the home. For example, patients must have a family member or caregiver who can assist with the taking of vital signs. After the screenings are complete, Tufts MC and Medically Home can then mutually recommend the patient be discharged to home under the care of Medically Home providers. Finally, the patient verbally agrees to this transition while at Tufts MC and signs a formal consent to treatment during the Medically Home admission process once home.

What happens once a patient is determined to be eligible to receive care at home?

The Tufts MC team reviews each case with Medically Home and prepares the normal paperwork for discharge to home. Medically Home arranges for the clinical needs, including equipment and medications that will be required to deliver and monitor care in the home. A paramedic team goes into the home in advance to set up the equipment and be ready to receive the patient. Medically Home then orders an ambulance to transport the patient home. Upon arrival, the paramedics connect the patient with a Medically Home doctor and admit the patient to home care. A vitals check is done and all

monitoring is initiated so that the patient is clinically integrated with the Medically Home command center.

How is the hospital at home care delivered on a day-to-day basis?

Patients receive 24/7 remote monitoring and hospitalist-level care. Clinicians in the Medically Home command center remotely monitor the patient's vital signs and offer bi-directional and visual communication anytime, day or night. Patients also continue to receive in-person home visits with visiting clinicians and are provided a personal emergency response device should they need it.

REFERRING PHYSICIANS

How do referring clinicians receive information about patients they care for?

The Tufts MC and Medically Home teams have partnered in developing a high-touch handoff, including efficient and timely communication with referring clinicians. Tufts MC captures information about the patient's primary care physician, including name and phone and fax numbers in the electronic health record. When the patient is discharged from an inpatient floor or the Emergency Department, Tufts MC faxes the discharge summary, including a note referencing the patient's transition to Medically Home to the primary care doctor. The PCP is alerted by Medically Home via fax when the patient has been admitted to their care, for any specialty consults, if the patient returns to the hospital and when the patient is discharged from Medically Home.

Additionally, while the patient is under the care of Medically Home Group, PCPs are welcome to reach out to Medically Home for lab results or any other clinical information using their referral number – 855-340-4663. Referring clinicians are also welcome to participate in video visits with the patient, though they are not able to bill for the visit

Can I refer my patient directly to Medically Home?

PCPs are not able to admit patients directly to Medically Home group under this arrangement between Tufts Medical Center and Medically Home Group. Medically Home Group does have different relationships with other providers and payers.

What are the benefits to patients and families?

First and foremost, Medically Home allows patients and families to receive acute care in the safety and comfort of their home, reducing the likelihood of potential hospital-based complications. The individualized care plan is informed by the patient and family and is coordinated with hospital and Medically Home teams. Overall, patients and families report improved satisfaction.

Is this safe?

There are many protections in place to ensure the safety of patients, including round-the-clock monitoring and access to clinicians, as well as a personal emergency response device that can be activated to dispatch 911 emergency services. Compared to similar hospitalized patients, research shows that Hospital at Home patients experience better clinical outcomes, lower rates of mortality, delirium sedative medication and use of restraints. Patients and families also report better satisfaction, less caregiver stress and better functional outcomes.

How are patients at home protected in the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic?

Medically Home is up-to-date on COVID-19 requirements and is following CDC and Massachusetts Department of Public Health guidelines. Every clinician going into the home to care for patients will have full PPE.