

Cardiac rehab coverage expands for chronic heart failure patients with symptoms

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Medicare's and Medicaid's newly extended cardiac rehabilitation coverage for chronic heart failure patients with symptoms has tripled the number who are now eligible, according to a study presented at the American Heart Association's Scientific Sessions 2015.

Chronic heart failure patients are at high risk for serious health problems and declines. The new coverage includes those who are on optimal medical therapy and have less than 35 percent ejection fraction, which is a measure of the heart's pumping ability.

Researchers analyzed Medicare patient information in the Get With The Guidelines-Heart Failure registry from 2008 to 2012, comparing patients who were previously eligible for [cardiac rehab](#) due to prior heart attack, heart valve surgery or other events in the previous 12 months; newly eligible heart failure patients; and patients who are ineligible for cardiac rehabilitation.

They found that newly eligible patients were more likely to be black and have atrial fibrillation, while having fewer previous hospitalizations than patients previously eligible for [cardiac rehabilitation](#). Newly eligible and ineligible patients had similar risks of dying in the next year compared with those who were previously eligible. However, newly eligible and ineligible patients had lower 90-day and one-year hospital readmissions compared with those previously eligible.

Provided by American Heart Association

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