

Hospital discharge program improves patient experience leaving the hospital

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A standardized, in-hospital discharge planning program, known as Project ReEngineered Discharge (RED), improves patient experience as they leave the hospital, according to researchers at Boston Medical Center. The study, published online in the *Journal of Patient Experience* found patients who received the RED intervention felt more comfortable caring for themselves at home than patients who went through a standard discharge.

Project RED, established in 2007, is a set of strategies aimed at improving the [discharge](#) process in a way that promotes patient safety and reduces readmission rates and emergency department visits. The intervention provides a color-coded, easy to read plan that gives patients information about medications, upcoming appointments, and a calendar of activities for the following 30 days.

Researchers looked at data from surveys delivered to patients receiving the RED intervention in an adult inpatient unit at an urban safety net [hospital](#) and compared those to patients who received a standard discharge. They found patients who received the RED intervention were significantly more likely to choose the top-box "very good" response to the item "Instructions given about how to care for yourself at home" than those who did not receive the intervention, 61 and 35 percent respectively.

"Improving [patient experience](#) by helping them better understand how to care for themselves in the transition from hospital to home means that

we're improving their overall quality of care while decreasing [hospital readmission](#) and decreasing the cost of care - which is our primary goal," says Brian Jack, MD, senior author of the study and chief of family medicine at BMC who created the Project RED program.

Readmissions are a pricey problem for hospitals, with one in five Medicaid [patients](#) being readmitted within 30 days of discharge, costing \$17 billion each year. "In addition to the financial savings, working to decrease hospital [readmission rates](#) allows us to focus on improving all the factors that contribute to a healthy patient population," said Ramon Cancino, MD, MSc, who led the study while serving as a fellow at BMC. Dr. Cancino is now assistant professor of family and community medicine at The University of Texas Health Science Center at San Antonio, now doing business as UT Health San Antonio.

Provided by Boston University Medical Center

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