

Rising obesity levels underscore need for enhanced nursing and post-acute transitional care models

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Elderly, chronically ill people experience frequent changes in health status that require transitions among health care providers and settings. Significant attention has been focused on coordinated transitional care models that assure continuity of care, prevention of hospital readmission, avoidance of complications, and close clinical treatment and management. But specific transitional needs of obese people who need to be transferred to nursing homes for post-acute care are often overlooked.

A study from the University of Pennsylvania School of Nursing (Penn Nursing) illustrates the challenges of transitioning persons who are severely obese to a nursing home after an acute care stay and, specifically, the experiences of hospital discharge planners. "Barriers in Transitioning Patients with Severe Obesity from Hospital to Nursing Homes" has been published in the *Western Journal of Nursing Research*.

The researchers found that patient size and perceived availability of bariatric equipment can act as barriers to discharging [obese patients](#) to nursing homes. Failure to move patients who are severely obese out of hospitals into post-acute care has the potential to lead to poor outcomes associated with extended hospital stays. These include an elevated risk for hospital adverse events and increased cost.

"Given increasing obesity rates, health care delivery systems must be

prepared to provide necessary resources and all levels of care, including transitions for hospitalized patients who are severely obese needing [nursing home care](#) post-discharge," explains lead-author Christine K. Bradway, PhD, RN, CRNP, FAAN, Associate Professor of Gerontological Nursing. "Understanding the unique nursing and transitional care needs of patients who are severely obese and optimizing their transitional care experiences is an increasingly relevant area of study."

More information: Barriers in Transitioning Patients With Severe Obesity From Hospitals to Nursing Homes, *Western Journal of Nursing Research* (2017). doi.org/10.1177/0193945916683682

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