

Hospitals can care for Medicare patients at home in pandemic

November 25 2020, by Linda A. Johnson

Hospitals will be allowed to care for Medicare patients in their own homes during the pandemic under a government program announced Wednesday to help hospitals deal with the latest surge.

Some hospitals already offered patients with private insurance the choice of getting care at home instead of in the [hospital](#). The pandemic dramatically boosted use of such programs.

The Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services said it will let hospitals quickly launch home programs, which will offer around-the-clock electronic monitoring for Medicare and Medicare Advantage patients who are sick enough to be hospitalized, but don't need [intensive care](#).

COVID-19 patients are eligible. Six [health systems](#) already offering "hospital-at-home" care were approved to participate in the Medicare program immediately.

"We're at a new level of crisis response with COVID-19" and this option will help hospitals increase their capacity to help more patients, CMS Administrator Seema Verma said in a programs have proven benefits for patients and can prevent complications they might experience in a hospital.

Leff helped CMS plan the program, along with experts at major hospitals already running such programs and three companies that contract with hospitals to run programs for them: Medically Home,

Contessa Health and Dispatch Health.

Since the pandemic began, all three companies have reported a surge of new, privately insured patients choosing to stay at home, where they can be more comfortable and have family around.

Medically Home Chief Executive Rami Karjian said he hopes elderly patients who might defer care during the pandemic "will now get the care they need."

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