

Case Study

Home Health Connect Expands Access and Improves Financial Outcomes

Liberty HomeCare & Hospice Services is North Carolina's largest home health and hospice service provider, with a growing network of South Carolina and Virginia locations. Founded over four generations ago, Liberty HomeCare is part of the full continuum of care offered by Liberty Healthcare.



CHALLENGES

Liberty HomeCare was facing clinical and financial challenges. Many referrals did not have an engaged PCP to complete the Home Health Certification and Plan of Care (485). Chasing down orders burdened the staff, decreased productivity, and ultimately resulted in write-offs for the agency. Billing error reports, payer denials, and slow payments threatened the company's financial health.

Ultimately, Liberty made the tough decision to only accept new patients with an engaged PCP who would follow the plan of care. But even with "engaged" PCPs, Liberty still struggled.

- Patients without an engaged PCP
- PCPs who would not sign the Plan of Care (485)
- Poor face-to-care encounter documentation
- Patients with PCP across state lines

NEGATIVE IMPACT

Liberty could not provide services to many patients who were clinically appropriate for home health.

“Our nurse goes out, does the start of care, formulates a plan, and sends it to the PCP to sign. We follow up, but it's dead silence for weeks, and this goes on and on. It's an age-old problem.”

Donna Turlington
VP, HomeCare, Hospice & Palliative Care

Liberty regularly received face-to-face encounter documentation that did not meet North Carolina's strict Medicare requirements, resulting in denials.

And, because Liberty operates many locations near state lines, many patients in their markets faced an additional hurdle. These patients could receive medical care or establish a PCP in one state, but physicians could not always treat the patient across state lines or certify the home health episode without licensure to practice in another state.



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SOLUTION >> **HOME HEALTH CONNECT - Telemedicine powered by Sound Physicians**

In August 2021, Liberty launched **Home Health Connect**, a telemedicine-based service provided by Sound Physicians that gives Home Health agencies access to skilled tele-physicians to expedite home health certifications and increase physician access during the home health episode.

With the **Home Health Connect** program, Liberty gets access to engaged hospitalist physicians via telemedicine to participate in the Start of Care visit and certify the Plan of Care, usually within the first 24 hours after the patient leaves the hospital. The program also gives home health clinicians on-demand access to tele-physicians for video consults to address escalations or changes in condition during the home health episode.

This has been a game-changer for Liberty *and* for patients who do not have an engaged PCP, improving access to services and financial outcomes. Since launching the program, Liberty has seen a dramatic reduction in BERS (billing error reports) and can bill and receive payment for services more quickly.



66%

REDUCTION IN BERS
(BILLING ERROR REPORTS)
Driving faster payments for services provided!

OUTCOMES

Better Access to Home Health Services, Fewer Denials, Quicker Payments

- Quality documentation by Sound's tele-physicians has reduced Medicare denials
- Liberty can provide immediate access to home health without chasing physician orders
- Quicker access to physicians has improved timely initiation of care, usually within 24 hours
- More efficient order signing has reduced billing report errors and expedited payments
- Program eliminates barriers to access for patients with a hospital stay or PCP across state lines

“ This program is making our lives easier, and that is a rare experience in home health. ”

Donna Turlington
VP, HomeCare, Hospice & Palliative Care



Let's talk about how Sound Physicians can make running your home health agency *easier*.
connect@soundphysicians.com