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## Somerset Hospital Home Health Offers Home Health Medical Technology to Area Residents

Through the use of new, in-home telemonitoring technology, patients served by Somerset Hospital Home Health throughout Somerset County are getting a checkup every day in the comfort of their homes.



In-home telemonitoring uses telecommunications devices placed in patients' homes to take their vital signs every day. The technology brings benefits to both patients and health care professionals and has a significant impact on patient care and quality of life.



When patients' vital signs are taken daily, irregularities can be caught before they become full-fledged problems. Daily monitoring helps eliminate the two or three-day gaps of information that typically occur between home visits. Patients also become more aware of their condition and understand the effects diet, activity and other factors have on their health.

Every day in just three minutes, the system collects a variety of vital signs such as heart rate, blood pressure, oxygen saturation, body weight and temperature. Peripherals, such as a glucose meter, spirometer and peak flow meter to measure lung function, PT/INR system to record blood clotting times, digital camera for wound care, ECG device to monitor heart rhythms and videophone, can be attached for specialized patient care.

The system can also gather subjective health information, which further assists in evaluating the patient's condition. The monitor can be programmed to ask up to 10 "yes" / "no" questions in 11 languages. Question sets can be tailored for each patient based on his or her diagnosis. For example, a patient with high blood pressure might be asked, "Are you experiencing any dizziness today?"

The data are transmitted via a telephone line or digital wireless technology over a virtual private network for review by Home Health clinicians. Each patient has a pre-programmed set of limits for their individual vital sign readings. If those limits are broken, an alert appears on the computer screen. This allows the clinician to quickly prioritize which patients require immediate attention. With this system, healthcare professionals can detect and address even the slightest abnormalities before they become serious.



"This system will help us keep patients healthier and out of the hospital," adds Sue Strohm. For more information, call Somerset Hospital Home Health at 443-4663.

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