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Provider Tools Can Help with CARE Act Implementation


Many states have passed a CARE Act requiring hospitals to provide training to identified family caregivers. The newly reorganized [Provider section](#) of the Next Step in Care website includes a comprehensive process for integrating family caregivers into transition plans. There are five subsections:

- **[A Toolkit for Working with Family Caregivers](#)**: This comprehensive toolkit is divided into five key steps of working with family caregivers: the Basics (e.g., identifying the family caregiver and conducting a caregiver needs assessment), Medication (medication reconciliation and management), Discharge Planning, the Transition, and Closing the Communication Loop. Some of the best tools and resources from around the country are brought together here.
- **[Specific Guides for Health Care Providers](#)**: These guides, produced by Next Step in Care, cover a range of topics, including HIPAA, the provider's role in care coordination, and referring caregivers to community-based organizations.
- **[Quality Improvement Surveys](#)**: Surveys to determine current practices relating to family caregivers are available for hospitals, nursing home rehabilitation programs, and home health care agencies.
- **[Videos](#)**: Short videos—mostly by subject matter experts in areas such as medication management, hospice and palliative care, and dementia—are featured.
- **[Frequently Asked Questions](#)**: These questions and answers are most often used to help providers make the case for the strategic importance of engaging family caregivers.

New Proposals on Medicaid and Medicare Could Better Support Family Caregivers

Two important federal rule changes—one related to Medicaid managed care, the other to paying physicians to hold advance care planning sessions with their Medicare patients—have been proposed. Because these changes would affect patients and family caregivers as well as providers, Carol Levine, director of the Families and Health Care Project, has commented on both:

- In her [public comment](#) on the proposed Medicaid managed care changes, Carol urges policymakers to recognize the substantial role that family caregivers play in maintaining Medicaid beneficiaries in the community by assessing the family caregiver’s needs as well as those of the patient, including them in planning discussions, and making them stakeholders in developing state and health plan policy.
- In a [posting](#)—on a Medicare proposal to pay physicians for advance care planning—on the Collaborative Family Healthcare Association’s “Families and Health” blog, Carol supports the proposed payment and the inclusion of families in the discussion but suggests that payment alone is not enough to ensure that these discussions achieve their goals. She offers several suggestions for providers to help overcome the challenges that these conversations often present.

For more commentary on family caregiving and transitions, join the conversation on our  page!

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