

A New Era for Home-Based Patient Care

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Among the numerous consequences of the Covid-19 Pandemic is a well-documented emphasis on the home. Work at home. Exercise at home. See your doctor or other health provider at home. Home-based health care beyond the traditional nursing care is yet another change wrought by the pandemic that will not likely be eliminated as we come to define the new normal.

Home health agencies have long operated in the health care ecosystem. These providers, however, are heavily focused on providing skilled nursing services to seniors, predominantly Medicaid beneficiaries.

More recently, industry participants have started furnishing an expanding and robust set of services in the patient's home, including telemedicine-enabled primary physician care. The American Academy of Home Care Medicine (the "Academy") explains that home-based primary care programs "provide appropriate care (primary, urgent or palliative) to high-risk, medically vulnerable patients, often suffering multiple chronic conditions, when and where they need it," and principally in a patient's home.[1] Another more traditional and limited variation of the trend is a resurgence in a familiar concept: the physician house call.[2]

These efforts may have powerful benefits for the homebound, according to the Academy. Home-centered patient care can (i) provide greater access to a broader range of patients, (ii) enhance patient monitoring efforts, (iii) facilitate timely interventions with respect to chronic conditions, (iv) alleviate social stressors that may impact poor health and (v) reduce hospitalizations and ultimately reduce health care expenditures.

Johns Hopkins Medicine has a home care program, which includes physicians, nurse practitioners and behavioral health specialists among other practitioners.[3] Each of Rush University Medical Center[4] and Tufts Medical Center[5] are also offering variations of physician house calls and more acute care offering in the patient home with the objective that these efforts will result in health care savings in the value-based world.

The investment world has also taken notice. Heal has recently expanded into four new markets[6] following a 2020 capital raise of \$100 million at a \$300 million valuation[7].

We are closely monitoring the world of home-based patient care as the prospect of better care at reduced cost may drive innovative partnerships, investments and M&A activity.

[1] https://www.aahcm.org/page/what_is_hbpc.

[2] <https://www.marketplace.org/2021/05/19/pandemic-innovation-high-tech-family-doc-brings-back-the-house-call/>.

[3] <https://www.hopkinsmedicine.org/homecare/services/home-based-medicine.html>.

[4] <https://homehealthcarenews.com/2021/05/why-rush-hcci-are-bringing-back-the-doctor-house-call/>.

[5] <https://www.tuftsmedicalcenter.org/news-events-media/press-releases/2020/medically-home-partnership>.

[6] <https://www.fiercehealthcare.com/tech/doctor-house-call-startup-heal-expands-to-four-new-markets-as-demand-for-home-doctor-visits>.

[7] <https://venturebeat.com/2020/07/29/heal-raises-100-million-for-telehealth-appointments-and-house-calls/>.

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