Sample Patient Newsletter Article

For use in your hospital’s newsletter, blog and website to promote participation in the ACC Patient Navigator Program to your patients



**Helping Heart Patients *Navigate* Their Condition**

Being hospitalized with a heart condition can be a stressful experience. The recovery process, which begins in the hospital and continues at home, can be equally stressful due to new medications, lifestyle changes and other concerns.

Nearly 1 in 5 patients hospitalized with a heart attack and 1 in 4 patients hospitalized with heart failure returns to the hospital within 30 days of discharge. These readmissions may not be directly related to their condition, but instead may be due to stresses patients encountered during their hospital stay, their lack of understanding of discharge instructions, an inability to carry out discharge instructions, or perhaps they just feel overwhelmed.

However, here at [Your Hospital’s Name], you never have to go home feeling overwhelmed or alone because [Your Hospital’s Name] is one of 35 hospitals selected to participate in the American College of Cardiology (ACC) Patient Navigator Program.

The ACC created the ACC Patient Navigator Program to help hospitals establish a care team—designed to support patients with heart disease during their hospital stay and in the weeks after they are discharged. This team is made up of physicians, nurses, pharmacists, and others who will work together to provide personalized support to each patient. AstraZeneca is the founding sponsor of the ACC Patient Navigator Program.

Studies show that patients benefit from hospital staff members dedicated to helping them transition from the hospital to their home. Our goal in participating in this program is to reduce the number of patients who return to the hospital by making hospitalizations less stressful and providing more support during the recovery period. As a part of this program, the members of your care team at [Your Hospital’s Name] will help you understand your condition, treatment, medications, and help you prepare for your return home. Our team will help you take control of your healthcare even after you leave the hospital.

**What Can You Do to Prevent Readmission?**

• Understand the condition for which you were hospitalized and what it means. Knowing what is going on in your body will help you take action to stay healthy.

• Follow all discharge instructions. Make sure you understand how to care for yourself at home. For example, know which medications you need to take and when, any warning signs of problems, and/or if there are certain activities you should avoid and for how long.

• Take your medications as directed. Your heart doctor (cardiologist) may prescribe blood thinners and other medications to manage your condition. Don’t stop taking these without talking with your doctor first. To learn more about common heart medicines, go to *CardioSmart.org*.

• Schedule (and keep) follow-up appointments with your cardiologist. This will help you work together to track your progress and know if treatments are working.

• Ask about cardiac rehabilitation. These programs are tailored to individual patients and can help lower the risk of future heart problems. A team of health professionals provides education and support to help you recover and start new, healthy habits, such as eating right and getting more exercise.

• Commit to a healthier lifestyle. To keep your heart healthy and your arteries open, eat a heart-healthy diet, exercise, stop smoking (if you smoke) and reduce stress.

• Report any changes. Tell your doctor if you start having chest pains or any other new or changing symptoms.

For more information about heart conditions and tips for healthy living, visit *www.CardioSmart.org*.

*And remember, if you think you are experiencing a life-threatening event like a heart attack, call 911 immediately*. Your well-being is our primary concern.