Barriers and Solutions to Help Patients Keep their Follow-Up Appointment

Possible barriers to ensuring the follow-up appointment occurs should be identified in advance. Here are common barriers and possible solutions from the H2H Community. Anticipating and addressing barriers to early follow-up can help patients receive the appropriate care they need and potentially prevent them from being unnecessarily readmitted.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Common Barriers</th>
<th>Possible Solutions</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>System Barriers</strong></td>
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| Appointment Access within 7 days | • Use of block scheduling to restructure appointments  
• Follow-up by nurse practitioners, physician assistants, or clinical pharmacist instead of a cardiologist or primary care clinician  
• Follow-up by home health service or visiting nurse association  
• Development of an outpatient HF clinic or HF discharge clinic  
• Hospital partnership with community physicians to prioritize discharged patients for appointments |
| **Environmental Barriers**       |                                                                                                                                                   |
| Transportation                   | • Provide options to patients for a follow-up setting they can most easily access  
• Identify a family member or friend to transport patient to the follow-up appointment  
• Provide shuttle service or a taxi voucher to patients |
| Cost                             | • Enrollment in financial assistance program per social work  
• Determine eligibility for additional financial assistance programs per hospital case managers |
| **Personal Barriers**            |                                                                                                                                                   |
| Patient forgets about appointment| • Provide an appointment card, wall-calendar, or other visual reminder with appointment time, date, and place  
• Remind patient of their follow-up appointment with a phone call 24 hrs prior to appointment  
• Confirm whether patient’s primary support (spouse, child, friend) knows of appointment time, date, and place |
| Patient self-care                | • Emphasize the importance of follow-up visit in discharge process patient education  
• Reinforce importance of follow-up visit within 7 days during reminder phone calls at least once after hospital discharge |