

White Paper

# Why Care Transitions is the Next Big Thing for the Home Care Industry

Discover how you can future-proof your agency  
& stay at the industry forefront

With advances in medicine, we now have the largest senior population in the history of the United States. Home care agencies, charged with managing care outside a medical setting, help our aging population lead longer, fuller lives.

Inevitably - be it through gentle aging or a traumatic health episode - not all of the 65+ crowd are able to continue living as independently as they once did and a hospital stay may become necessary.

Though doctors and hospitals do everything they can while a patient is in their care, they can't dedicate

themselves to following patients after discharge. Partnering with a home care agency gives the patient the best chance to maximize their recovery and avoid a costly, unfortunate hospital readmission.

What most private duty home care agencies don't realize is how well they are already positioned to offer these in-demand care transition services.

This paper discusses the importance of adding care transitions management and how Ankota Software for Care Transitions enables care providers to be on the forefront of this need.



## **Introduction**

Every avoided hospitalization results in thousands of dollars saved; and, in most cases, a higher quality of life for the person involved. It's a win-win and your private duty home care agency has a chance to be part of it. In fact, offering care transition services can be the key that propels your agency to grow and be an industry leader.

## **Performing Care Transition Services positions you to win an ongoing referral**

Let's start off with perhaps the most important reason – you will make money! Patient transition from hospital to home is the most sought-after care transition service. If your agency provides that service, you have the opportunity to take extra steps while the caregiver is present and endear yourself to the patient and their family. Something as simple as making sure that there is no spoiled food in the refrigerator and instead fresh and healthy things to eat can mean the world to a concerned loved one. In the likely event that they need additional ongoing care, you've positioned yourself for the win.

## **Care Transition Services provide a career path for your outstanding aides**

As your agency has grown, you've likely come across some fantastic home aides who improve your agency's reputation and bring you positive feedback from the individuals and families they support. You've probably rewarded them with higher pay and keep them as booked as you are able. You'd like to do more, but great caregiving skills don't necessarily translate into great office management skills. So what do you do? With a care transitions program, you can give your aides (including those who may aspire to be nurses) a chance to perform at a higher level of responsibility and help them move from paraprofessional employment into a professional career path.

## **Hospitals and Physician Practices need this service, but don't want to staff it**

Doctors offices and hospitals have optimized their business models around a specific geographic location (the hospital itself or the practice office). They have doctors and nurses and telephones, which are all key to managing care transitions services, but they don't have a mobile work force and don't want to manage one. They'd prefer to partner. You, by contrast, have the ability to send people to places and dedicate them to providing remote care. With the new payment models that hospitals and practices are adopting - such as Accountable Care Organizations (ACO) and Patient Centered Medical Homes (PCMH) - they are paid fixed fees for the care of their patients. Extraneous cost avoidance is a strong interest and need of theirs and you have the skills to be the answer to this problem.

## **Home Health Agencies are shunning this opportunity**

You would be right to think that your natural competition for this service should be home health agencies as you both have health care expertise and a mobile workforce. But... they don't want it and in many cases the hospitals don't want them for the following reasons:

- 1) Home Health Agencies are accustomed to receiving around \$3,000 for a 60 day care episode whereas this care transition service only pays a few hundred dollars and are not financially attractive.
- 2) In most cases, hospitals have nursing service teams in place causing overlap and conflict with home health services. This leaves an attractive window of opportunity for your organization.

**Pick up where the hospital leaves off... and be rewarded!**

Note: We love home health agencies (and realize that many private care agencies are now a division of a home health agency). We are just noting their trend of rejecting this work.

## **New Funding Models are popping up every day**

As recently as 3 years ago, people excited about care coordination would say, “We do it because it’s the right thing to do, even though we don’t get paid for it.” Since then, lots of things have changed:

- 1) Hospitals with higher than average readmissions for 2015 are now subject to penalties up to 3% of their Medicare reimbursement (this started at 1% in 2013 and is growing).
- 2) New calculated payment models offer a health system a fixed amount per patient (based on age/ gender/ condition). Specifically, the Accountable Care Organizations (ACOs) and Patient-Centered Medical Homes (PCMH) follow this model.
- 3) It was recently announced that physician practices can receive a small monthly fee for patients with chronic conditions.
- 4) There are many private duty agencies offering a paid care transition service.

With rising attention from healthcare administration officials, care transitions services are the right thing to do – for patients and an agency’s business case.

## **Competitive Differentiation makes you the gold standard**

As a leader in your market to deliver care transitions services, not only will you will be setting the bar high for your competitors, you also have the advantage when doctors and hospitals come looking for service providers. Additionally, consumers are more savvy than ever - grown children looking for a care provider for their aging parents are going to seek out reviews and compare service capabilities on popular sites like Yelp and Caring.com. When you take initiative and provide the quality services that both hospitals and patients want, you put yourself well on the way to a five-star review.

If you think your company lacks time or resources, think again - This is a need, not a fad. Your caregivers already have most of the needed experience and the return on investment is tremendous. Others may balk at the opportunity to expand functionality and add care transition services to their practice; but when you see how simple it really is, you’ll be glad you made the changes.

## You will be making a difference & reforming health care

Ankota was started with this big issue / need in mind: 5% of patients spend 50% of the health care dollars in America. If our capabilities could help care providers focus attention on those 5% and reduce avoidable hospitalizations, we can save hundreds of billions of dollars. We built our software to enable this in conjunction with private duty care. We'd love to help you be part of the transformation of healthcare. The end result will be happier patients with better health outcomes and lower costs - and you'll make some money in the process. Everybody wins!

### About Ankota

Ankota provides advanced yet accessible, HIPAA-compliant software solutions for managing home care and care transitions. We are dedicated to dramatically improving the quality, efficiency and coordination of care delivered at home. We believe that the home care industry is a key foundation for health care reform (which we simply define as Better Care at Lower Cost). Please learn more about Ankota's software for private duty non-medical care and care transitions at <http://www.ankota.com>



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