

Heal at Home: Expanding Care Capacity and Transforming Patient Recovery

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Learning Objectives

- Explain the process of a home health agency vertical integration inside of an academic medical center.
- Describe essential infrastructure components for consistent care delivery between hospital and home.

Background

- Health system capacity challenges impact patient care through added emergency department wait times and delayed transfers to and within hospitals, including postponed surgeries.
- Capacity strains can be eased by accelerating the transition from the hospital to the patient's home among select post-operative and medical care populations.
- University of Utah Health partnered with Community Nursing Services (CNS) to promote these safe earlier transitions by establishing the Heal at Home program.

Program Overview

- Heal at Home aims to optimize hospital capacity by streamlining transitions of care, specifically targeting reduced length of stay.
- Combines technical expertise with home health infrastructure, enabling safe post-operative and medical care transitions across various specialties.
- The home health benefits in most insurance plans means that no novel reimbursement mechanism is necessary for program sustainability.

Participating Specialties

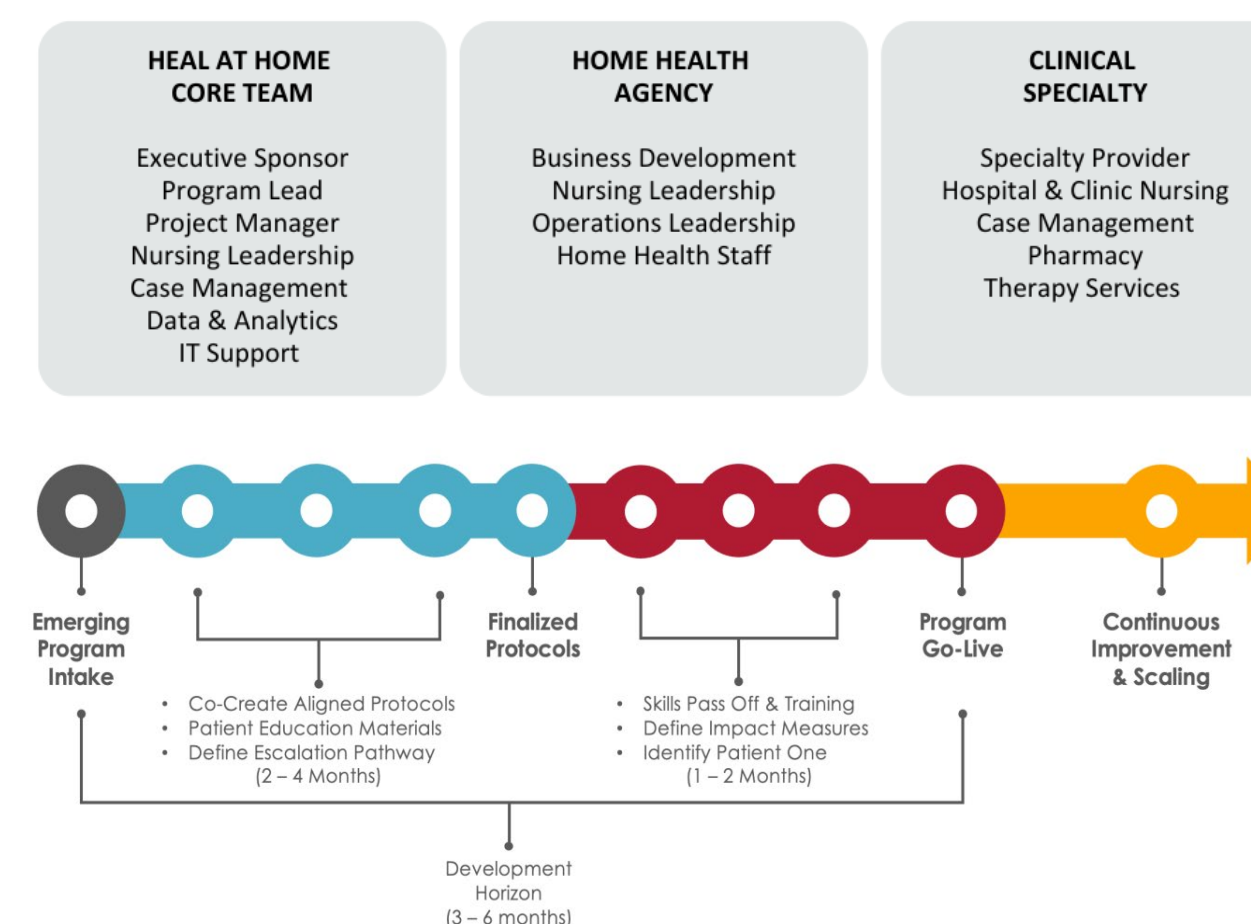
22+ Established Programs

- Breast Mastectomy, Colorectal Surgery, Emergency Medicine, Gynecology, Gynecologic-Oncology, Hospital Medicine, Neurosurgery (Skull-Based Tumor), Neurosurgery (Spine), Ortho Hip and Knee, Ortho Shoulder, Ortho Spine, Ortho Trauma, Physical Medicine and Rehab, Postpartum, Surgical Oncology, Transplant Surgery (Liver), Transgender Health, Urogynecology, Urology (Abdominal Wall), Urology (TURP), Uro-Oncology (RALP), Vascular Surgery

3+ Expanding Programs

- Acute Care Surgery, Heart Failure, Ortho Foot & Ankle

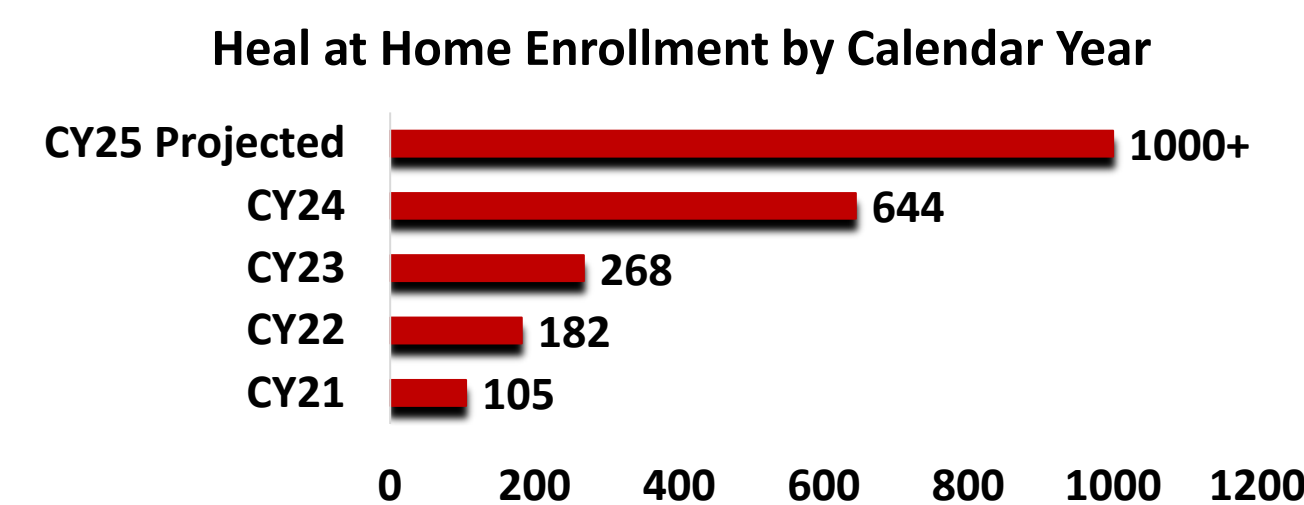
Program Development



How Does Heal at Home Differ From Traditional Home Health?

Home Services	Skilled Nursing & Labs (EPIC), Remote Monitoring, Vitals
Dedicated Team	Consistent home health team to care for the patient – establishing trust & consistency
Accountability	Bi-directional accountability – clinical care, quality, safety
Shared Protocol	Co-developed nursing protocols
Communication Tools	EPIC access, SPÖK (encrypted texting)
After-Hours Support	Defined escalation of care pathways – U of U Health provider driven
Measured Impact	Outcomes tracked/trended

Enrollment



Outcomes

Bed Days Saved	1236 bed days saved since program inception
Patient Satisfaction	99% of Heal at Home patients are likely or very likely to refer
30-day Readmission Rate	4.6 compared to 17% for other home health agencies in Utah
ED Utilization	8.4 compared to 10% for other home health agencies in Utah

Data Source: Internal U Health Report, CORETEX

Lesson Learned and Key Takeaways

Lessons Learned

- Clinical program champion and multidisciplinary program development is essential.
- Dedicated personnel are critical for program expansion.
- IT infrastructure requires time and resources and is necessary for scaling.

Key Takeaways

- A partnership between hospital and home health agency can improve patient experience and increase hospital capacity.
- Start small, build on successes, and focus on patient safety and experience.
- The future vision is to have seamless transitions of care across all hospital to home discharges across the entire health system.

References

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- Gorbenko, K., et al., A national qualitative study of Hospital-at-Home implementation under the CMS Acute Hospital Care at Home waiver. J Am Geriatr Soc, 2023. 71(1): p. 245-258.

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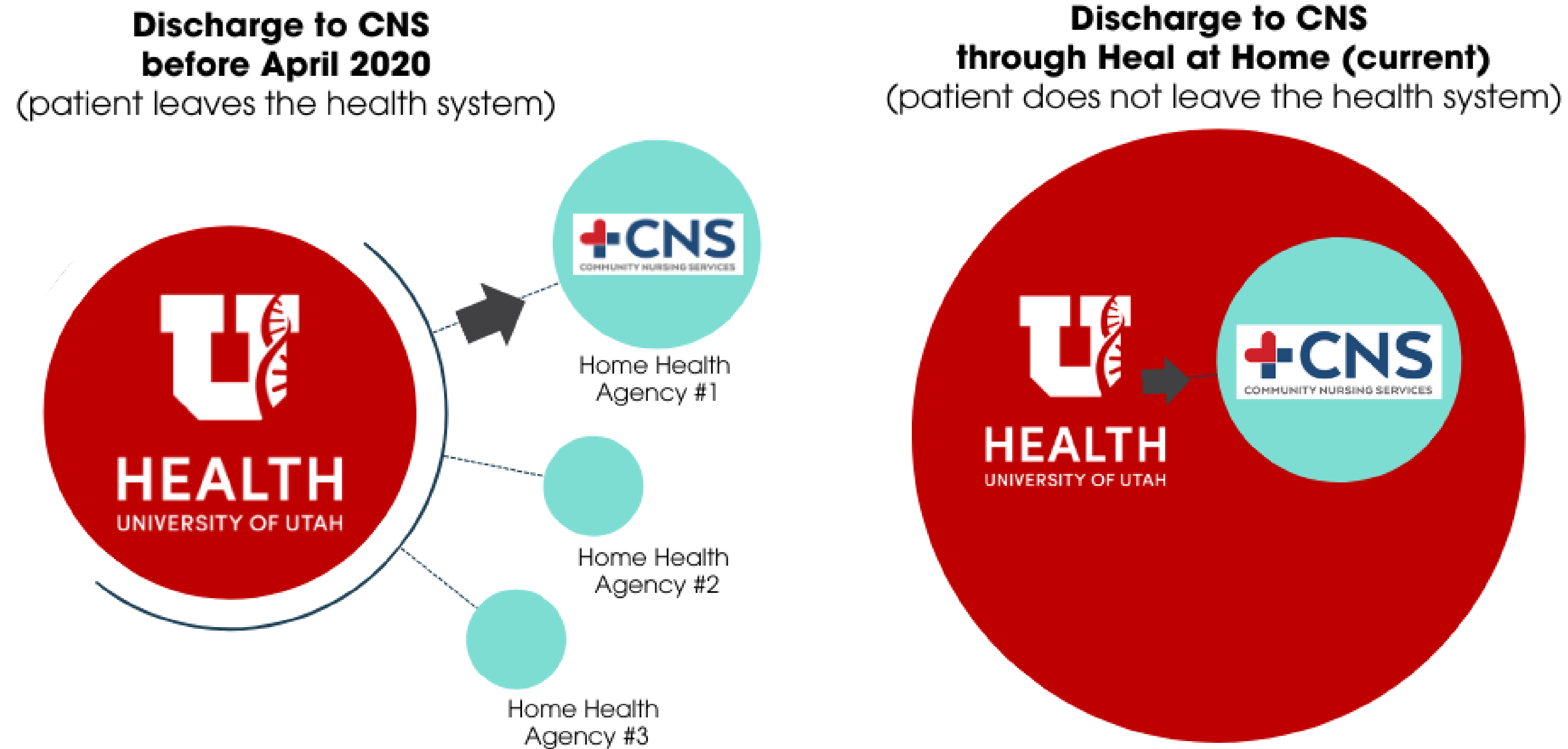
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Heal at Home: Vertical Integration

CNS and UUH Partnership

As of April 2020, Community Nursing Services is a 501(c)(3) owned and operated by University of Utah Health



Hospital at Home vs Heal at Home

	<u>Hospital</u> at Home	<u>Heal</u> at Home
Patient Status	Inpatient	Outpatient
Reimbursement	CMS Waiver	Home Health Benefit
Service Line	Mostly IM	Multi-specialty
Patient Enrollment	Unplanned	Planned + Unplanned
Cost / Overhead	\$\$\$	\$*

*Cost varies by specialty