The Use of an Enteral Nutrition Discharge Checklist to Enhance Patient Care and Help Streamline the Discharge Coordination Process

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Introduction
Discharge planning begins at the time of admission. For patients on home enteral nutrition, coordination of care is multidisciplinary and complex, and requires the clear communication of information between the hospital and the home care company providing the therapy (see Figure 1). Enteral discharge orders should be comprehensive and detailed. When they are not, a delay in discharge or a service failure can result due to a lack of complete details, documentation, and prescriptions. Detailed information is needed to ensure authorization of complete details, documentation, and prescriptions. Incomplete discharge orders may result in a delay in the process of initiating pre-discharge home enteral therapy education. A delay was indicated any time a patient’s care had not been initiated by the planned start date. Records were compared to determine whether the referral was made with or without the use of the ENDC.

Methods
A retrospective review was conducted of records for 100 random patients who were initiated on enteral care by Coram Specialty Infusion Services between May and July 2013. Records were reviewed to assess whether incomplete home enteral orders resulted in a delay in the process of initiating pre-discharge home enteral therapy education. (A delay was indicated any time a patient’s care had not been initiated by the planned start date.) Records were compared to determine whether the referral was made with or without the use of the ENDC.

Purpose of the ENDC:
- To ensure that all critical details to complete seamless home enteral nutrition referral processing are sent to the home enteral provider from the referring customer.
- To allow the home enteral provider to efficiently obtain payer authorization, coordinate home delivery, and initiate care in the home.
- To promote continuity of care from hospital to home and to help ensure that patient enteral therapy goals are achieved, monitored, and adjusted when needed.

Information required in the ENDC:
- Patient demographics (height / weight / age / gender)
- Medical insurance payer name and ID number (informational purposes only)
- Prescriber information
- Prescription: Enteral formula name with method of administration, volume and/or rate, and estimated length of need, as well as date and signature
- History and physical report and nutrition assessment
- Delivery information
- Other information:
  - Swallow evaluation if appropriate and available
  - Enteral tube type with size

Results
- Fifty-one patients were referred with use of the ENDC. For these patients, 67% of the records were complete and 33% were incomplete. Six percent of these patients experienced a delay with their home therapy set-up.
- Forty-nine patients were referred without use of the ENDC. For these patients, 45% of the records were complete and 55% were incomplete. Thirty-four percent of these patients experienced a delay with their home therapy set-up.

Conclusions
The use of the ENDC to coordinate referral to a home enteral provider can promote a smooth transition of care from an inpatient setting to the home. This improvement in discharge planning early in the admission process can help prevent a delay in discharge to home, resulting in hospital cost savings. (The United States Census Bureau determined that in 2009, the average hospital cost per day was $1,853, with an overall cost per stay of $10,043.*)

Modifications of the ENDC tool used in this study are being considered to improve the completeness of patient records upon initial referral.


Figure 1. Process for Enteral Referral to Home Care Company

Figure 2. Discharge Orders: Degree of Completion and Delay to Discharge

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>ENDC n = 51</th>
<th>Without ENDC n = 49</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Complete</td>
<td>67%</td>
<td>33%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not Complete</td>
<td>33%</td>
<td>67%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Delay to Discharge</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>45%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overall</td>
<td>55%</td>
<td>54%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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