



Hospital-Based Transitional Care Units

Transitional Care Units, commonly referred to as TCUs, are beds in a hospital that would provide patients 65 years of age and older a short-term level of care once their acute diagnosis is stabilized. These patients require this interim care because they are not yet well enough to be transferred to home, a subacute rehab facility, or a nursing home. Transitional care is simply a level of care between the acute care hospital setting and the patient's discharge destination. Transitional care is always provided in a hospital. The length of stay is very short – a minimum of five to a maximum of 21 days – but these days make a tremendous difference in terms of stabilizing the patient and the patient's continued recovery.

Hospitals treat and keep patients in the hospital based upon Medicare's pre-determined lengths of stay for diagnoses and conditions. However, many Medicare patients, for a variety of reasons, are not yet at the point where they can be discharged home, to a subacute facility, or to a nursing home, and these patients remain in the hospital beyond the pre-determined Medicare lengths of stay. Hospitals refer to these days as "excess days." Medicare does not reimburse hospitals for these "excess days" of care.

If hospitals in New York were given license to dedicate Transitional Care Units and submit charges to Medicare for this specific level of care, pressure to discharge patients would lessen.

What You Can Do

If you agree that hospital-based TCUs would benefit you and your loved ones, then please contact your state representatives.

Legislative History

Language included in the state budget passed in 2005 allowed five transitional care demonstration projects to occur in hospitals throughout the state. John T. Mather Memorial Hospital in Port Jefferson, NY is one of these five and the only Long Island hospital that received authorization from the state department of health to pilot a TCU. Mather's three-year pilot TCU became operational in early 2007, and is a collaborative project with

Island Nursing and Rehabilitation, a not-for-profit skilled nursing facility in Holtsville, which is sponsored by Mather Hospital. To learn more about Mather Hospital's TCU go to www.matherhospital.org/pages/services_transitional.asp.

Legislation passed in June 2010 expands the number of TCU demonstration programs in New York State from the current five to 18. In addition, the legislation nullifies the sunset dates previously placed on the demonstration programs. Ideally, we need legislation that would enable these units to be located in all hospitals in New York.

New York State and Connecticut are the only two states in the nation without TCU licensure for all hospitals.

If You Have Further Questions about TCUs or Other Concerns Contact

Kevin Dahill, President/CEO of NSHC 631-435-3000

Wendy Darwell, COO of NSHC 631-963-4152

Janine Logan, Director, Communications 631-963-4156; Cell:631-334-8321

Or go to our website, www.nshc.org, click Pending Issues for transitional care and access template letters to legislators.

About the Nassau-Suffolk Hospital Council

The Nassau-Suffolk Hospital Council (NSHC) is an association that represents the interests of Long Island's 24 not-for-profit and public hospitals. We advocate for favorable legislation, rational regulation, and effective health and hospital policy. In so doing, we also represent your interests as hospital consumers. The NSHC was formed in 1955. Since our founding, we have helped advance landmark medical waste legislation and regulation and forwarded legislation to reform the unfair practices of commercial health insurers. Additionally, we sponsored innovative programs to help alleviate our region's health care workforce shortage, and coordinated a Cohesive Emergency Preparedness Effort among our local and state health departments, law enforcement agencies, hospital members, and other first responders. (Revised 8/4/10)