Understanding All-Payer Readmissions at North Carolina Acute Care Hospitals

Recently, the North Carolina Quality Center analyzed all-payer readmissions data for 110 acute care hospitals in North Carolina. The purpose of the analysis was to better understand what challenges these hospitals face when addressing readmissions. The analysis included all adult, non-OB patients living in North Carolina discharged between October 1, 2014 and August 31, 2015.

Question 1: How do readmission rates compare by payer for NC hospitals?

The overall readmissions rate among the 110 hospitals in this analysis was 14.9%. Looking at rates by payer, the Medicaid readmission rate was highest (19.4%) followed by Medicare (16.5%).

Question 2: Among NC hospitals, how often did high utilizers of a hospital readmit?

During the time period for this analysis, there were 21,681 patients across all 110 hospitals that were characterized as "high utilizers" – meaning patients with 4 or more inpatient discharges in one year. The readmissions rate among these patients was 43.4% (48,681 readmissions on 112,094 discharges). In addition, these readmissions made up 47.7% of total readmissions across all hospitals in this analysis.

Question 3: Among NC hospitals, what were some of the top diagnoses (by DRG) leading to readmission?

For this analysis, specific diagnoses leading to readmission were identified on the initial hospitalization - although the readmission itself could be for any reason. Among Medicare discharges, the top diagnoses (defined as those leading to the highest number of readmissions) were heart failure and sepsis. The table below lists the top four diagnoses, as well as the associated readmission rates, for Medicare and Medicaid patients.

Question 4: Among NC hospitals, what was the readmissions rate for behavioral health patients?

For purposes of this analysis, behavioral health patients were identified as having a primary diagnosis (ICD-9) between 290 and 319. The readmissions rate for these patients among all 110 hospitals was 13.8% during the time period for this analysis.

Further insight into readmissions among acute-care hospitals in North Carolina is provided in the following table:

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Data: (10/14 - 8/15)	Medicare	Medicaid	Other	Total
Discharges by Payer	376,368	70,427	235,604	682,399
% Total Discharges	55.2%	10.3%	34.5%	100.0%
Readmissions	62,079	13,636	26,278	133,799
% Total Readmissions	60.9%	13.4%	25.7%	100.0%
Readmissions Rate	16.5%	19.4%	11.2%	14.9%
Behavioral Health (BH) Readmissions Rate (BH Readmits/Total BH Discharges)	*	*	*	13.8%
High Utilizers (HU) Readmissions Rate (HU Readmits/HU Discharges)	*	*	*	43.4%
High Utilizers (HU) % Readmissions (HU Readmits/Total Readmits)	*	*	*	47.7%
Top Diagnoses Leading to Readmission (with associated Readmission Rates)	Heart Failure (23.5%) Sepsis (18.7%) COPD (21.5%) Renal Failure (20.2%)	Psychoses (16.2%) Red Blood Cell Disorders (40.4%) Heart Failure (29.3%) Sepsis (21.7%)	*	Heart Failure (22.9%) Sepsis (17.9%) Psychoses (14.2%) COPD (20.8%)

*Data suppressed

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