

Telehealth Services provided at the W.C.N.H.

Wayne County Nursing Home and Rehab Center is now providing telehealth services for its residents. By using videoconferencing equipment physicians in Rochester and New York City are able to assess the patient who is at the Nursing Home. This is a new service and we are aware of only 3 other New York nursing homes providing telehealth services in their facility. "In the short time, we have been providing telehealth, we have also seen the unexpected benefit of having our nurse interacting directly with the specialist. Previously, the nurse relied on a written report and the aide who went with the patient to the appointment. This will certainly improve the quality of care," said Cathie Chabrier, who has managed the project for WCNH.

"The primary advantages are that residents don't have to travel for an hour each way and they can get the specialty services that are not available locally," said Marge Haroff, Administrator.

Each resident has an appointment time and arrives in the exam room in the nursing home, just they like would if they traveled to the doctor's office. Then nursing home staff connects with the physician by videoconference and are available during the appointment to take vital signs, assist the patient to interact with the doctor and ensure that recommended follow-up is documented and managed. Residents are a little hesitant at first but after the first minute, they adjust pretty quickly to talking to the doctor on the television.

We anticipate that as residents return for ongoing care, they will appreciate the benefits of ease of use and location. This was made evident with our first technical difficulty. Recently during the severe weather with Hurricane Irene, internet and phone services were having outages in our area and we had to cancel a telehealth appointment. That was disappointing, but the resident had only spent 20 minutes coming down from her room and waiting in the exam room instead of taking a long ride each way and waiting at the hospital for an appointment that did not happen.

Wayne County Nursing Home has been working on this project for almost two years. We were seeing the benefits of going to the Rochester General Health Office of Telehealth on the Newark-Wayne Community Hospital campus, but still needed to transport residents to their location. Dr. Anthony DaSilva of Wayne Medical Group who provides care at the Nursing Home was influential in promoting the partnership and will be supervising the Nurse Practitioner, who will be providing telehealth services at the nursing home. The equipment was purchased earlier this year with a grant from the Bullis Fund of the Rochester Area Community Foundation.

Telehealth is a growing field as nationally we recognize the benefits of using technology to overcome the shortage of physicians in rural areas. Cindy Gordon, Telehealth Manager RGHS stated that, "It has been our experience that by providing specialty care through videoconferencing, patients receive care earlier, have increased access to multiple specialists, with improved outcomes". Wayne County Nursing Home is able to have Geriatric, Psychiatry, Psychology and Plastic Surgery/Wound consults currently. We expect that in the next year we will be able to add Nephrology and Dermatology. We will continue to study the impact of the program and expand services to meet resident needs.

Written by Catherine Chabrier, Assistant Administrator

Caption for photos (attached).

Harry Diakogiannis uses Wayne County Nursing Home's telehealth services to be seen by Dr. Shershow. Patti Bullock, LPN assists with the visit.

