Telehealth Roles and Responsibilities

This column is a series aimed to help prepare your organization to implement and employ a successful telehealth program. We’ve covered the basics of telemonitoring, how to select a telehealth vendor, and how to establish a program model and set goals. Now you’re ready to assign roles and responsibilities. There are several key roles required for a telehealth program to be successful.

**Program Champion**
Whether your organization is implementing a new EMR or telehealth, a key requirement to starting any new program is a strong *Program Champion*. In this case, the *Program Champion* should have an excellent understanding of telehealth and its benefits to the patient *and* the organization. Necessary qualities include engaging, leadership, clinical experience, and credibility.

**Project and Program Manager**
In some cases, the *Program Champion* will also act as the *Project and Program Manager*. Not only does the *Project and Program Manager* manage the telehealth program, but they will also provide ongoing management and review of outcomes with a goal of refining and expanding the program. This person must also have a solid understanding of the organization’s policies and procedures, workflow, and patient care processes... And of course, an affinity for technology!

**Education Manager**
As with any implementation, the staff must be educated. The person filling the role of *Education Manager* depends upon the size of your organization and the resources available. In some cases, there is a dedicated *Education Manager*, but in other cases it may be a few people educating when their schedules allow.

**Device Manager**
The *Device Manager* is responsible for transportation, installation, de-installation, and cleaning devices. The *Device Manager* will need to safely transport the devices, as well as work with the patient to complete the installation and demonstration of use. Good interpersonal, technical, and trouble-shooting skills are key contributors of success. Detailed documentation outlining the policies and procedures is imperative for sound device management.

**Installers**
If your telehealth device *Installers* are nurses, they will educate the patient about how to use the devices. In some cases this will be at an install visit; in other cases a follow-up visit may be required. The *Installer* needs to have expert knowledge of device functionality, utilization, and proper technique for taking vital sign measurements, as well as experience educating adults.

**Telemonitoring Nurse**
Lastly, to implement an effective telehealth program, someone clinical on staff (typically the *Telemonitoring Nurse*) will need to identify and evaluate telehealth candidates, enroll and manage patients, verify physician orders and patient consent, as well as manage device inventory and utilization. Frequently, the intake coordinators, installers, and admissions nurses will assist the *Telemonitoring Nurse* in these tasks.
Marketer
A telehealth program is a great marketing tool. It’s important to identify someone in your organization with sound marketing skills to effectively market your program to referral sources.

No matter the role, clear documentation of responsibilities is critical to the health of your telehealth program.

If you have any questions, please call Philips Telehealth Solutions at (800) 422-0768 or visit www.philips.com/telehealth.