

Improving Home Care with Durable Medical Equipment

Today's aging population wants to stay home and enjoy daily living. With durable medical equipment, it's possible to meet individual medical needs while accommodating a safe home life.

"Durable medical equipment is really a canned term provided by the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services," explains Neidi Mack, Vice President of Ancillary Services for Prism Healthcare Services. "In simple language, it's equipment that can withstand repeated use."

The aging aren't the only ones benefitting from durable medical equipment. Home medical equipment also aids those born with disabilities throughout the stages of their lives.

Equipping the Home

A variety of devices are available to aid home living. Oxygen ventilators, CPAP machines and monitoring equipment are categorized as durable medical equipment. Walkers and wheelchairs classify as home medical equipment.

Physicians and acute care environments are the entities who refer patients for equipment. The medical necessity is documented in the patient's record. A hospital representative, case manager, or discharge planner starts the equipment dispatch process with Prism Healthcare Services.

Prism Healthcare Services staff receive specialized training in the equipment they provide. They deliver and set up the equipment before training the patient on proper use. They also inspect the home environment to be sure equipment can be safely operated.

Footing the Bill

"Medicare and most insurance payers will cover items as long as they are medically necessary," states Mack. "Essentially, what that means is that the payer is looking for the patient to have seen his or her physician to establish some reason—specifically a medically-based reason—the equipment is needed."

Medicaid is considered the "payer of last resort," meaning they tend to cover items that are not covered by Medicare. Medicare classifies some items as convenience items, like raised toilet seats, toilet safety rails, blood pressure cuffs, and incontinence items.

Most insurance companies will rent equipment for the patient for up to thirteen months before purchasing that equipment. Exchanges come with no additional fee. The tendency is for equipment to be replaced by insurance companies after five years. Adverse home events are considered for earlier replacement, as in the case of a home fire or robbery.

Prism Healthcare Services makes a point of educating patients on their own financial responsibility in receiving equipment for the home. Knowing out-of-pocket costs ahead of time informs the decision to receive home care. They help manage referrals, obtain documentation, and work with the insurance companies before equipment is delivered to the home.

Mack sums up their dedication to quality patient care. “Ultimately, what we are looking for is to have a great patient outcome, and a great patient outcome really comes down to patients avoiding re-hospitalization and being able to live out their lives independently without any further visits for the same condition.”

Prism Healthcare Services is the Alden Network’s durable medical equipment transitional care partner. To learn more, visit www.thealdennetwork.com.



***To listen to an interview with Neidi Mack, Vice President of Ancillary Services for Prism Healthcare Services, follow this link: <https://radiomd.com/alden/item/37736>*