

Wireless patient monitoring devices solve telecommunications challenges while leveraging the benefits of telehealth

“ The Genesis Touch – a wireless remote patient monitoring device we now offer – is so intuitive that even our much older patients who were more reluctant to engage with technology could begin using it immediately.”

- Shane Levasseur,
Telehealth Coordinator,
Androscoggin Home Care & Hospice

Androscoggin Home Care & Hospice uses Honeywell's Genesis remote patient monitoring devices to communicate with and engage moderate to high-risk patients following a post-acute event. Since first implementing their telehealth program in 2001, the combination of monitoring devices and Honeywell's clinical software – LifeStream Management Suite – has allowed them to consolidate and easily track patient data, helping them to achieve significant reductions in hospital readmissions. But a recent trend in patient telecommunications created the need for a wireless device solution, for which they've successfully utilized Honeywell's new Genesis Touch.

When care providers at Androscoggin Home Care & Hospice, the largest Home Care & Hospice agency in Maine, initially launched their telehealth program, they were quickly able to see positive results from utilizing Honeywell's Genesis family of remote patient monitoring devices to track the daily vital signs of patients and streamline patient-acquired data into one internet-accessible clinical dashboard.

In fact, initial success stories from the agency's first 25 monitoring devices were so impactful, Androscoggin Home Care & Hospice decided to invest in acquiring more devices, and has since augmented their number of monitoring devices by more than 50 per year. They are now able to monitor more than 200 patients at one time, and have dramatically decreased overall hospital readmissions among their monitored patients – to as little as 6 percent in some cases (well below the national average of around 20 percent).

But recently, the agency noted that a telecommunications trend in their area was creating some additional challenges to providing remote patient monitoring services – the shift from almost all patients having land-line phone services to a number of patients moving to solely cellular usage – which made traditional land-line based telehealth devices unusable without the purchase of additional equipment.

A Wireless Device Presents the Telecommunications Solution

To address this issue, Androscoggin Home Care & Hospice purchased Honeywell's new Genesis Touch remote patient monitoring devices, to provide all the traditional telehealth benefits with the added perk of mobility: With its wireless functionality, the Genesis Touch isn't tied to a land-line – it can be used virtually anywhere.

According to Shane Levasseur, Telehealth Coordinator for Androscoggin Home Care & Hospice, the Genesis Touch even worked in places with spotty cellular coverage.

“Our agency operates in a very mountainous region of Maine, and so I took the Genesis Touch devices on a little road trip to ensure they would work everywhere we needed them. I was pleased to note that even in places where I've dropped cellular phone calls due to limited coverage, the Touch devices connected immediately and I was able to transmit data back to our main office.”

Utilizing the Genesis Touch to overcome telecommunications challenges allowed Androscoggin Home Care & Hospice to address the shifting requirements of its clientele, and provided additional benefits as well, such as reducing device installation time, improving ongoing patient oversight and educational opportunities, and providing high rates of patient satisfaction.



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Saving on Installation Time

When Androscoggin Home Care & Hospice began using the Genesis Touch devices, one of the immediate benefits realized was a decrease in time needed for device installation in a patient's home: trained Androscoggin Home Care & Hospice installation staff members have reported a minimum of a 50 percent reduction in overall installation time.

"Using one of the traditional monitoring devices involves locating a land-line phone jack for connection purposes," said Mr. Levasseur. "Because of that, it wouldn't be uncommon for our technicians to spend 10-20 minutes looking for that phone jack, if a patient didn't know where one was, or moving furniture to access it."

That has all changed with the Genesis Touch: "You turn it on, and you're connected," said Mr. Levasseur. "That makes for a dramatic reduction in the time we spend installing a device."

This productivity improvement has allowed the agency to reach more patients, without adding additional staff.

Improving Patient Oversight and Educational Opportunities

Androscoggin Home Care & Hospice executive staff members have also identified several key future uses for the Genesis Touch, to help them improve patient oversight and advance educational opportunities.

For example, following a patient's hospital discharge, specialist nurses at Androscoggin Home Care & Hospice often receive inquiries for additional information regarding patient care - which will frequently lead to the specialists driving 130 miles to assess patients in their homes on any given day. But using the live video functionality on the Genesis Touch would allow them to virtually connect with patients and on-site staff, and make recommendations without all the travel, giving them more time to be interacting with patients, and less time spent on the road.

The agency also foresees utilizing the tablet format of the Genesis Touch to provide educational information for patients who have chronic conditions. For example, the agency's diabetic educator has identified information he would like to incorporate into the device's

main user interface in the future, so patients have easy access to necessary disease management information.

"We recognize the immense benefits that come from using telehealth services," said Mr. Levasseur. "The Genesis Touch has really allowed us to go further in expanding our telehealth offering for patients, while also providing new ways for us to care for them more effectively - now and in the future."

High Patient Satisfaction

Mr. Levasseur concluded that patients are very happy with the Genesis Touch, despite initial reactions to its high-tech tablet format.

"Some of our patients are initially nervous about using a monitoring device that looks just like the slick gadgets their kids and grandkids are carrying around, but once they begin working with the highly-intuitive user interface, they love it," said Mr. Levasseur. "I've had patients in their late 80s and early 90s who've been able to pick up and use the Genesis Touch immediately, with little to no learning curve. It's just that easy to use."

Androscoggin Home Care & Hospice is a non-profit, Medicare-certified, Joint Commission accredited agency that offers a continuum of care which helps individuals of all ages maintain their health, independence and quality of life in their homes and communities.

The agency offers skilled home care for individuals recovering from illness, injury, surgery, or a changing medical condition; hospice care for individuals with a terminal illness or end-of-life decline; and supportive care for individuals needing non-medical support to maintain their independence and safety.

Androscoggin Home Care & Hospice has four offices, operated out of Bridgton, Lewiston, Norway and Wilton, with 278 full-time and part-time staff and 109 per diem staff

It has received the following special recognitions:

- Best Places to Work in Maine Award (2012, 2010, 2008, 2006)
- Community Service Leadership Award from Androscoggin County Chamber of Commerce (2008)
- Dirigo Award for Nonprofit Excellence (2008)
- Economic Development Achiever's Award from the Cities of Lewiston and Auburn (2007)
- Maine Hospice Council Joe Mayo Innovation Award (2006)
- Margaret Chase Smith Quality Award - Level II (2003, Level I (2001)
- WCSH Agency of Distinction Award (2002)
- Noyes Award for Non-Profit Excellence (2001)
- Governor's Award for Business Excellence (2000)

Key Results

- Solution to a telecommunications barrier
- Decreased time spent on device installation
- Improved patient oversight
- Enhanced patient educational opportunities
- High rates of patient satisfaction