

# MPRO'S IMPACT ON HEALTH CARE IN MICHIGAN: 2008-2011



*MI STA★AR*



22670 Haggerty Road, Suite 100 • Farmington Hills, MI 48335  
(248) 465-7300 • Fax (248) 465-7428  
[www.mpro.org](http://www.mpro.org)





## *Detroit Hospital Cuts Readmission Rates In Half*

Each day, **Peggy Segura, FNP-BC**, a nurse practitioner within the Department of Medicine at DMC Sinai-Grace makes follow-up calls to dozens of heart failure, stroke and other patients at high risk for hospital readmission. These calls are just a part of Sinai-Grace's pre- and post-discharge efforts to reduce costly hospital readmissions. Since Sinai-Grace put these interventions in place, its 30-day all-cause heart failure readmission rates have been cut in half from more than 40 percent to 18 to 22 percent. "In December 2010, for example, we regularly called and tracked 84 patients and only 15 were admitted," Segura says.

While Sinai-Grace has achieved impressive results, hospital readmissions remain a national concern. Nearly one in five of the nation's Medicare patients are readmitted to the hospital within 30 days of discharge, resulting in annual costs of nearly \$17 billion. Michigan is no exception, so an effort was launched in 2009 to reduce the hospital readmission rate

in Michigan hospitals by 30 percent.

Called MI-STA\*AR (State Action on Avoidable Rehospitalizations), the four-year project is being co-led by the Institute for Health Improvement, the Michigan Health & Hospital Association's (MHA) Keystone Center and MPRO, Michigan's Quality Improvement Organization. The project, which began with 15 hospitals, now includes 61 hospitals all across the state. One of those hospitals is DMC Sinai-Grace.

DMC Sinai-Grace represents a stabilizing presence in a city with high unemployment and some of the highest rates of cardiovascular disease in the country. In fact, DMC Sinai-Grace not only has been a constant employer in the area for decades with more than 2,200 staffers, but has ranked in the Top 1% Nationally for Heart Failure Recovery as well as one of America's Best Hospitals 2009-2010 by *US News & World Report*.

Apart from these recognitions, Sinai-Grace was among the first group of hospitals to sign up

for MI-STA\*AR. As a part of its commitment to the project and at MPRO's recommendation, the hospital began gathering feedback from patients.

"MPRO has been the mediator. They've helped with guidance and direction with MI-STA\*AR," says Segura.

The hospital found patients were having transportation issues, weren't following diet and exercise recommendations, or worse, could not afford their medications after discharge. As a result, Sinai-Grace implemented system-wide process changes starting from the day of admission through post-discharge.

Some of those changes include distributing discharge information packets on the day of admission to a caregiver and conducting heart failure teach-backs two to four days into the hospital stay and every day until discharge.

"We started seeing patients one by one on the floor for the teach-backs," says Segura. "We asked them, for

example, 'Do you know the signs or symptoms of heart failure?' Or, 'Do you know your medications?'"

In addition to the teach-backs, Sinai-Grace has established a detailed discharge process which includes among other actions distributing teaching materials to patients, helping them fill prescriptions through a program called 'First Fill.' The program allows patients to have medications filled and delivered to their rooms on the day of discharge.

Additional outreach initiatives like educating patients on insurance companies that provide transportation for doctor visits and support groups like 'Healthy Hearts' are enhancing Sinai-Grace's MI-STA\*AR efforts. The group has been a lifeline for one of Segura's patients, Sandra (not her real name), who suffered a stroke in 2009.

"Dr. Peggy," as she calls Segura, "...takes care of me. She explained my disease. She called to check on me and everyone [Sinai-Grace] has been real helpful."

Since her stroke in 2009, Sandra says she's had no other issues and her health is good. But she doesn't take her current condition for granted. For more than a year she has attended Sinai-Grace's monthly Healthy Hearts group. During these meetings, women who have suffered from cardiovascular diseases or those who are looking to remain healthy, come to hear Segura and other health care professionals talk about the importance of keeping a low fat and low sodium diet among other topics.

"I eat right, and I am managing with my medications," confirms Sandra.

To expand on outreach efforts like Healthy Hearts, as well as their MI-STA\*AR efforts, Sinai-Grace took part in a MPRO-led effort called DCARR (Detroit Community Action to Reduce Rehospitalizations).

In partnership with the Corporation for Supportive Housing, health care professionals who participated in DCARR identified the opportunities to establish

the ongoing initiative known as FUSE (Frequent Users Systems Engagement). Specifically, FUSE aims to reduce rehospitalizations among the homeless, unemployed, uninsured, mental health and substance abuse patients.

"We are finding that this same more personalized approach with patients is making a difference in the number of emergency room visits and rehospitalizations for these underserved populations," says **Nancy Vecchioni, RN, MSN, CPHQ**, Vice President, Medicare Operations, MPRO.

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