(NU) - There are many things that American health care professionals do well, but transitioning patients from hospital to home still isn’t one of them.

From anxiety about at-home care to confusion with instructions and medications, to lack of appropriate equipment, coupled with little to no communication between doctors and patients, it’s no wonder that hospital readmission rates remain at an all time high, according to a 2012 report from the Alliance of Community Health Plans.

A Pittsburgh-based health care services company, however, believes this doesn’t have to be the case. Instead, a new program by AdvaCare is helping patients and doctors come together.

“By becoming an advocate for both patients and physician’s, AdvaCare has found a way to bridge treatment for patients from hospital to home and help reduce overall health care costs,” said AdvaCare Home Services President Tammy Zelenko.

Zelenko noted that the Patient Partner Program, which recently launched, decreases health care costs for patients by reducing the number of hospital readmissions, emergency room visits, and additional health complications that can occur during the hospital-to-home transition.

No small undertaking, but a necessary one since, according to the report, the U.S. loses $26 billion annually in Medicare readmissions, which means that AdvaCare’s program could be just what the doctor ordered.

And if insurance won’t cover the cost of a home health care provider, be prepared for some sticker shock. According to disabled-world.com, depending on what city you live in, the average out-of-pocket expense of hiring a home health care aide is $29 an hour or $18,000 a year for someone to come in three times a week for 12 months. In Los Angeles, the price tag goes up to $50 per hour.

For its part, AdvaCare helps patients with the transition from hospital to home by monitoring its patients and providing detailed, individualized patient care plans and in-home assessments.

“The program offers physicians and doctors an additional route that helps save lives and money,” Zelenko said. “The focus is not only to help patients adjust to their diagnoses, but to make lifestyle changes, and educate them on their chronic diseases. Through this level of dedication, AdvaCare is helping hospitals avoid costly readmission penalties, allowing more involved patients to better manage their healthcare,” she said.

For more information, visit www.advacarehsppp.com.