

STATE OF RHODE ISLAND

IN GENERAL ASSEMBLY

JANUARY SESSION, A.D. 2011

A N A C T

RELATING TO HEALTH AND SAFETY -- HOSPITAL DISCHARGE PLANNING  
REQUIREMENTS

Introduced By: Senators Picard, Ciccone, Cote, Lombardo, and Miller

Date Introduced: April 14, 2011

Referred To: Senate Health & Human Services

It is enacted by the General Assembly as follows:

1 SECTION 1. Title 23 of the General Laws entitled "HEALTH AND SAFETY" is hereby  
2 amended by adding thereto the following chapter:

3 CHAPTER 17.26

4 COMPREHENSIVE DISCHARGE PLANNING

5 **23-17.26-1. Findings.** – The general assembly hereby finds and declares that:

6 (1) According to data provided by the department of health; in 2009, over 1 in five (5)  
7 adults discharged from acute care hospitals in Rhode Island were readmitted within thirty (30)  
8 days;

9 (2) During that same period, the readmission rate for adults over the age of sixty-five (65)  
10 rose to almost thirty percent (30%);

11 (3) The issue of hospital readmissions has emerged nationally as a critical focal point for  
12 improving quality, ensuring patient safety, and controlling excessive costs;

13 (4) Locally, high hospital readmission rates are often due to: missing or incorrect  
14 information regarding patients; ill-timed information transfer; medication errors or poor  
15 compliance; lack of outpatient follow-up; or lack of follow-up by patients when their symptoms  
16 worsen;

17 (5) Evidence-based interventions can improve communications systems and patient  
18 activation, thus addressing the root causes of hospital readmissions and reducing rates;

1           (6) Encouraging best practices in patient discharge and transitions out of hospitals offers  
2 significant potential for improving patient care and containing healthcare costs in Rhode Island;  
3 and,

4           (7) The State of Rhode Island, with the cooperation of the state’s hospitals, has already  
5 made significant gains in fostering care coordination and improving quality of care.

6           **23-17.26-2. Definitions.** – As used in this chapter:

7           (1) “Director” means the director of department of health.

8           (2) “Department” means the department of health.

9           (3) “Hospital” means a person or governmental entity licensed in accordance with chapter  
10 17 of this title to establish, maintain and operate a hospital.

11           **23-17.26-3. Comprehensive discharge planning.** – (a) On or before July 1, 2012, each  
12 hospital operating in the State of Rhode Island shall submit to the director:

13           (1) Evidence of participation in a high-quality comprehensive discharge planning and  
14 transitions improvement project operated by a nonprofit organization in this state; or

15           (2) A plan for the provision of comprehensive discharge planning and information to be  
16 shared with patients transitioning from the hospitals care. Such plan shall contain the adoption of  
17 evidence-based practices including, but not limited to:

18           (i) Providing in-hospital education prior to discharge;

19           (ii) Ensuring patient activation such that, at discharge, patients, families, and caregivers  
20 understand the patient’s conditions and medications and have a point of contact for follow-up  
21 questions;

22           (iii) Identifying patients’ primary care providers and scheduling post-hospital follow-up  
23 appointments prior to patient discharge;

24           (iv) Expanding the transmission of the department of health’s continuity of care form, or  
25 successor program, to include primary care providers’ receipt of information at patient discharge;  
26 and

27           (v) Coordinating and improving communication with outpatient providers.

28           (b) The director shall promulgate all rules and regulations necessary to effectuate the  
29 purposes of this chapter.

30           **23-17.26-4. Severability.** – If any provision of this chapter, or the application thereof to  
31 any person or circumstances shall be held invalid, any invalidity shall not affect the provisions or  
32 application of this chapter which can be given effect without the invalid provision or application,  
33 and to this end the provisions of the chapter are declared to be severable.

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1 SECTION 2. This act shall take effect upon passage.

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EXPLANATION  
BY THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL  
OF

A N A C T  
RELATING TO HEALTH AND SAFETY -- HOSPITAL DISCHARGE PLANNING  
REQUIREMENTS

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- 1           This act would require that Rhode Island hospitals submit to the director of the
- 2 department of health a plan regarding the discharge of patients.
- 3           This act would take effect upon passage.

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