

Home Respiratory Care Services

Prologue: Ambulatory and subacute respiratory care is defined as those respirator care services provided in a community setting, including physician offices, clinic settings, sub-acute care settings, long-term acute care, telehealth, and the patient's home. Respiratory therapists are the healthcare professionals that have a detailed understanding and competency in respiratory care. This is a rapidly evolving area of respiratory care practice, and this statement provides a broad view of respiratory care delivery in the ambulatory and sub-acute settings. Respiratory care services include, but are not limited to:

- Patient assessment and monitoring.
- Diagnostic and therapeutic modalities and services.
- Equipment implementation and management.
- Disease management
- Patient, family, and caregiver education.

These services are provided on a physician's written, verbal, or telecommunicated order (as required) or protocol approved by the physician and practiced under appropriate law, regulation, and qualified medical direction or physician supervision. The site of care may include, but is not limited to, single-family homes, multi-family dwellings, assisted living facilities, telehealth, and retirement communities.

Respiratory therapists work together with the health care team to:

- Develop an individualized plan of care designed to minimize symptoms and limitations while optimizing the patient's quality of life.
- Educate patients and their caregivers to maximize participation in self-care and improve adherence to prescribed care;
- Inform the healthcare team of the patient's condition and response to the care plan;
- Administer diagnostic and therapeutic modalities and services;
- Conduct disease management that aligns with a national and global standards and
- Promote early identification and treatment of a worsening of a patient's health (i.e., exacerbation), minimizing the need for hospitalization and other higher levels of care.

It is the position of the American Association for Respiratory Care (AARC) that the respiratory therapist – by virtue of education, training, and competency testing – is the most competent healthcare professional to provide prescribed respiratory care. The complexities of the provision of respiratory care are such that the public is placed at a significant risk of injury when respiratory care services are provided by unqualified persons, either licensed or unlicensed, rather than persons with appropriate education, training, credentials, and competency documentation.

Although access to a respiratory therapist is limited by reimbursement for services, it is the position of the AARC that practitioners who are employed to provide ambulatory and sub-acute care respiratory care must possess the Certified Respiratory Therapist (CRT) or Registered Respiratory Therapist (RRT) credential awarded by the National Board for Respiratory Care, as well as state licensure or certification where applicable.

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