

## Respiratory Therapists as Cardiopulmonary Care Managers

A care manager collaborates with other health care providers on behalf of the patient through screening, assessing, stratifying risks, planning, facilitating, and coordinating care in all care venues covered by the scope of practice<sup>1</sup> to address the comprehensive health care needs of an individual and their caregiver(s). Care managers serve as advocates for the patient and promote high quality care and cost-effective outcomes. The American Association for Respiratory Care (AARC) promotes the respiratory therapist as a cardiopulmonary care manager for the value and expertise a respiratory therapist brings to health care teams and to patients who are experiencing cardiopulmonary diseases.

As a cardiopulmonary care manager, the respiratory therapist collaborates with various health care providers including physicians, advanced practice providers, social workers, nurses, home medical equipment providers, and other service providers to facilitate the effective delivery of respiratory care services to meet a patient's complex health needs. This is accomplished through evaluating, assessing, and planning a patient's care as well as supporting their transition across all care venues in partnership with other providers in a safe and timely manner.

The respiratory therapist cardiopulmonary care manager is responsible for:

- Optimizing interventions and settings to align them with treatment goals as well as with the transition, post-acute, or home care plan.
- Evaluating and identifying respiratory home medical equipment to optimally support the best clinical outcomes.
- Collaborating with other clinicians and agencies (nursing case management, social work, third-party payers, and home medical equipment providers, etc.) to define a safe transition to the post-acute care setting.
- Providing follow up in the outpatient setting, directly or through the use of remote evaluation technologies when available and appropriate, in partnership with home health agencies.
- Serving as a clinical expert in payer-based settings for worker compensation and utilization review.
- Providing evidence-based and comprehensive education to patients and caregiver(s) regarding optimal disease management. This will include providing resources and continuing opportunities for training and education in the post-acute and home care settings related to the use of medications, equipment, and other therapies to enhance their quality of life.

The American Association for Respiratory Care (AARC) recommends that the requisite qualifications for a respiratory therapist to practice as a cardiopulmonary care manager include:

1. the successful completion of an accredited respiratory care educational program,
2. the Registered Respiratory Therapist (RRT) credential from the National Board for Respiratory Care (NBRC),

3. a state license (where required) to practice as a Respiratory Therapist, and
4. a baccalaureate degree in a biological or health science.

Reference:

1. AARC Position Statement – Respiratory Care Scope of Practice. Accessed via <http://www.aarc.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/03/statement-of-scope-of-practice.pdf>

**Developed 11 / 2018** (charge from AARC President Brian Walsh on 02/2018)