



Holiday Planning: Keeping Patients Home for the Holidays

The holidays are fast-approaching. For some it is a celebratory time with family and friends, while for others it is more difficult.

Many patients with chronic diseases struggle to stay healthy during the holidays. Some tend to eat or drink too much during the holiday season and unfortunately, holiday foods are usually high in fat, salt, or sugar. Traveling and change in routine can lead to skipping or missing important medications. Additionally, holidays can increase stress and depression. Unfortunately, during this time, the hours for primary care clinics and pharmacies are reduced and patients are not always able to get the support they need.

As you gear up for the holiday season, here are our top five tips for helping your patients to stay healthy and “Home for the Holidays.”

1. Focus on high-priority patients. In many Aledade ACOs, partner practices are reaching out to high-priority patients via phone call, email, or mail. High-priority patients are those who frequently visit the Emergency Department (ED), have been recently hospitalized, or are on the chronic care management worklist. Many ACOs are

running phone banks, where Aledade staff or contractors call high-priority patients to inform them about their practice’s hours around the holidays. They also remind the patients about same day/next day appointments, the availability of an on-call provider 24/7, and the flu shot. Almost all of our partner practices are hanging Home for

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the Holidays posters and mailing postcards or emailing high-priority patients. These materials are customized with the practice’s office hours and holiday closures, as well as any specific after-hours information.

2. Reach out to high-risk patients under care management to make sure they have everything they need to avoid a visit to the local hospital. If they are frequent ED users, consider bringing them in for a visit, especially if they lack social support.

3. Take the time to update voicemail with holiday closing and on-call coverage information so patients and families know when you will be available for them. Try to avoid recordings that advise patients to go directly to the ER, rather, encourage them to call the on-call provider and if necessary, go to urgent care.

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4. Ask your team to ensure that prescription refills are up-to-date for patients on your “worry list” and or reach out to local pharmacies who may be willing to fill your patients’ prescription by protocol for a short time if your office is closed.

5. Share your closing message about holiday plans through waiting room posters, mailings, website/patient portal, social media, or better yet with a friendly reminder in person with each office visit.

The materials mentioned above can be a great place to start!

We know that the holidays can be stressful for some of your patients but hope that you will find a way to help them stay safe and at home while you and your staff enjoy some well-deserved time with your own families.



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