



Home Health Nursing:
**How to Prevent Heart
Failure Rehospitalizations
with Online Training**

By MedBridge

Overview

Heart failure (HF), also referred to as congestive heart failure (CHF), is a common diagnosis among home care patients that has a high risk for hospital readmission due to disease exacerbation—yet many readmissions are preventable.

Home care clinicians play a crucial role in helping to prevent rehospitalizations in HF patients, but incoming nurses often don't have the training they need to properly manage HF patients, because of being new to the field or transitioning from inpatient acute care.

With home health agencies under pressure to improve quality of care while keeping costs down, many are turning to online training as an efficient, effective way to give staff the critical information they need to manage patients with chronic conditions such as HF.

In this guide we'll cover:

- What home health nurses need to know to prevent disease progression and reduce rehospitalizations in HF patients.
- Why agencies are adopting online training to help staff better manage chronic conditions like HF.
- How MedBridge can help.

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Preventing Rehospitalizations in HF Patients

HF is a chronic condition in which the heart can't properly pump blood throughout the body. Although HF isn't curable, proper treatment and lifestyle changes can reduce symptoms overall and prevent the disease from escalating as quickly.

Common symptoms of HF include shortness of breath; fatigue; swelling in the legs, ankles, feet, and abdomen; rapid or irregular heartbeat; and persistent cough. Without proper management, HF can progress to:

- ✓ Stroke
- ✓ Cardiac arrest
- ✓ Respiratory distress
- ✓ Kidney damage
- ✓ Liver damage

For patients, life with HF can feel erratic. One day they might feel good and go about their typical activities, while on other days they might experience shortness of breath and fatigue. To prevent HF from progressing, home health nurses must ensure that patients follow their prescribed care regimen, regardless of how they're feeling from day to day.



Congestive heart failure (CHF) is the most common cause of rehospitalization in the US for people older than 65 years of age, but proper patient management can reduce the instance by half.¹



Benefits of Online Training for Home Health Nurses

It's essential to ensure that nurses coming from acute care have the training they need to properly manage HF in a home setting. For many agencies, digital training is a highly effective solution for improving competency without the significant overhead of in-person training time and costs. It offers many benefits for home health agencies and nurses, including:

- **Reduced costs** by eliminating the need for expensive, time-consuming in-person in-services.
- **Time savings for nursing preceptors** due to fewer tasks they need to perform.
- **More opportunities for participation** through interactive formats and easier access to instructors.
- **Better flexibility** for busy nurses.
- **Easier training and progress tracking** across your teams.
- **Simplified and streamlined documentation** assigning and tracking for admins.

"The number of nurses who participate in online nursing education programs has dramatically increased in recent decades, and many studies have shown positive outcomes of online nursing education in terms of achievement, satisfaction, outlook, and increased desire for learning."²

— S. Karaman, *Nurses' perceptions of online continuing education*, *BMC Medical Education Journal*

What Should My Nurses Know about Heart Failure?

To properly manage HF patients, home health nurses should be versed in:

- Cardiac anatomy and physiology as they relate to HF
- The use and rationale for HF medications based on HF pathophysiology
- How to manage early signs and symptoms of HF exacerbation to prevent rehospitalizations
- Common patient barriers to self-care management
- How to reduce the risk for hospitalization through engaging patients in HF self-care management

How Can MedBridge Help?

MedBridge offers an expert-led online certificate program, [Heart Failure Management in the Home: Reducing Rehospitalizations](#), that allows home health nurses to advance and grow their knowledge and understanding of heart failure to provide expert patient care and reduce the risk of rehospitalization.

This accredited program provides essential information about the pathophysiology of HF, medication management, activity and exercise, self-care management barriers, and how to employ strategies to improve self-care.

Participants will improve their ability to confidently manage patients with HF through:

- ✓ **Accredited Online Courses**—6 hours of online video lectures and patient demonstrations.
- ✓ **Interactive Learning Assessments**—Case-based quizzes to evaluate and improve clinical reasoning.
- ✓ **Case Study Interviews**—Motivational interviewing roleplay demonstrations to help clinicians learn this key skill.

Conclusion

The number of people diagnosed with HF is increasing and projected to rise by 46 percent by 2030, resulting in more than 8 million people with HF, according to the American Heart Association.³ The condition is common among home care patients, with some studies showing a prevalence of HF in up to 33 percent of post-acute care patients.⁴

With the high rate of nurses transitioning to home health from acute care due to burnout, it's especially important for new hires to receive efficient, effective training that can help them properly manage HF patients through close monitoring of signs and symptoms, patient and family support and education, and appropriately intervening when there are signs of HF exacerbation. With the right training program, your agency can help improve staff competency and reduce rehospitalizations for chronic conditions like HF, while saving valuable time and costs.

References

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ABOUT MEDBRIDGE

Founded in 2011, MedBridge is an innovator at the intersection of healthcare technology, education, and patient engagement. We have helped more than 2,500 healthcare organizations grow their business, elevate their workforce, and deliver exceptional patient experiences. For more information, visit [medbridgeeducation.com](https://www.medbridgeeducation.com).

See how MedBridge can help your organization.

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