

Preventing Hospital Readmissions for Heart Failure Through Home Care Agencies

Background: Approximately 80% of hospitals in Montana are Critical Access Hospitals (i.e., limited-service hospitals serving rural areas). Although heart failure is the leading cause of potentially preventable hospitalizations in the state, most Critical Access Hospitals cannot afford to offer formal programs designed to prevent recurring hospitalizations because of heart failure. Home care agencies may be able to bridge this gap by providing support to heart failure patients, such as periodically measuring blood pressure and helping patients maintain a healthy weight.

Action: The Montana Cardiac Initiative—a collaboration between the Montana Cardiovascular Health Program and the statewide Cardiac Workgroup—used GIS to identify rural areas with high rates of heart failure hospitalizations that could be served by nearby home care agencies. This information will help the state identify opportunities to work with home care agencies to prevent hospital readmissions for patients with heart failure. The Cardiac Workgroup, which includes health professionals from cardiac interventional hospitals and Critical Access Hospitals across Montana, will use the map as it develops tools to help rural hospitals manage the hospitalization of patients with heart failure.

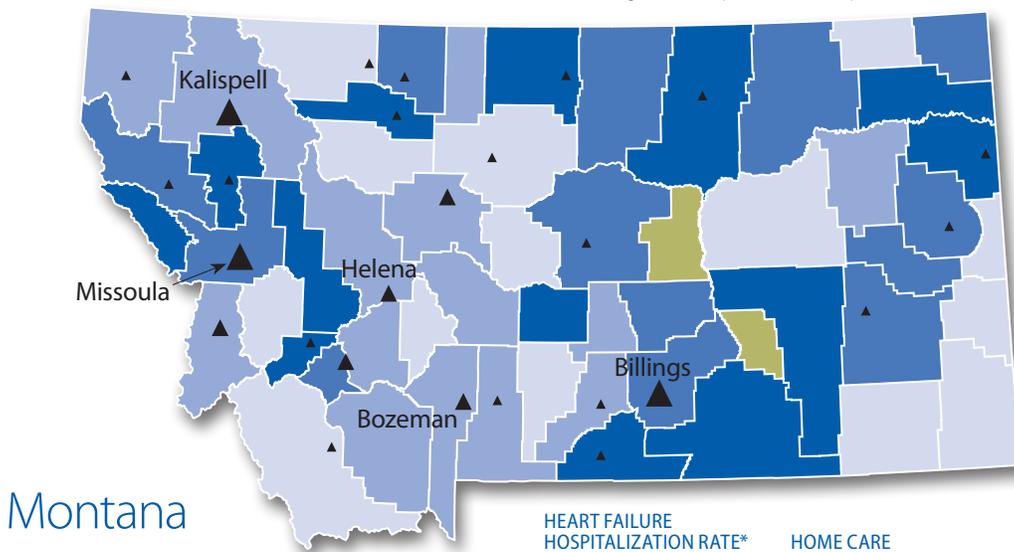
Enhancing GIS Capacity

Staff from the Montana Department of Public Health and Human Services enhanced geographic information systems (GIS) capacity within their agency by participating in a collaborative GIS Capacity Building Project provided by CDC, the National Association of Chronic Disease Directors, and the Children's Environmental Health Initiative at the University of Michigan.

The Power of GIS

Learn more about how public health personnel use the power of GIS to address chronic diseases and submit your own maps to the Chronic Disease GIS Exchange:

www.cdc.gov/dhdsp/maps/gisx.



Montana

This map shows heart failure hospitalization rates for counties in Montana and location and number of home care agencies. These agencies serve the cities and nearby rural areas in which they are located. The map reveals some counties with limited access to home care agencies despite high hospitalization rates for heart failure.

HEART FAILURE HOSPITALIZATION RATE* (QUARTILES)

- 132.8–288.1
 - 288.2–355.3
 - 355.4–451.3
 - 451.4–1036.0
 - Insufficient data
- STATE RATE: 379.3

*Age-adjusted per 100,000 population.

HOME CARE AGENCIES

- ▲ 1 agency
- ▲▲ 2–3 agencies
- ▲▲▲ 4–5 agencies

Sources: Montana Hospital Discharge Data System (2000–2008), Care Pathways (2011).

For more information please contact

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