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SPECIAL INSTRUCTIONS: _____

DATE: _____



To Patients/Caregivers: Benefits of a Home Program

HOW HOME PROGRAMS BENEFIT SPEECH PATHOLOGY GOALS/OUTCOMES

A home program is an assigned set of tasks that have been conducted in the speech therapy session, and continued practice of these exercises is important for the continuation of progress.

Home programs are given to patients and patient families when:

- Speech pathology initial evaluations and beginning treatments occur, especially in certain settings where treatment cannot be conducted most days of a week (outpatient therapy, home health).
- When upon evaluation, it appears that the patient does not demonstrate the indicated factors for a positive prognosis to be in place for achieving gains, but the patient and the patient's caregivers/family would benefit from ongoing exercises or structured/organized practice tasks.
- Awaiting a transition to another level of care — discharge from hospitals, skilled nursing facilities, outpatient clinics and home health agencies.
- Discharge from speech pathology serves -- with the purpose of maintaining gains that have been achieved in the treatment course.

Examples of home programs may be:

- ✓ oral motor exercises or laryngeal strengthening exercises for swallowing,
- ✓ compensatory strategies for swallowing during oral intake,
- ✓ exercises for practicing articulation/communication strategies,
- ✓ methods for preparing food and liquid to the indicated consistencies for safety.
- ✓ breath support exercises for improving voice,
- ✓ vocal strengthening exercises,
- ✓ vocal hygiene practices,
- ✓ functional memory/recall and other cognitive activities in the patient's home environment,
- ✓ fluency-enhancing measures to use outside of therapy sessions,
- ✓ tasks for families to perform with the patient to address communication deficits,
- ✓ structural supports to use in the home to support swallowing, communication and cognition,
- ✓ ways to utilize leisure activities to practice speech and swallowing recommendations,
- ✓ attempting new strategies introduced in therapy in new contexts to improve mastery, and
- ✓ potentially, other tasks not listed here.

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Patients and caregivers may ask:

“Why is a home program important?”

- In many settings, for gains to occur, practicing tasks that address goals need to be conducted every day for positive outcomes. As with home health and outpatient settings, it is not possible for the speech pathologist to be available at this frequency for facilitation of these tasks. When a speech pathologist assigns and updates home programs during the course of treatment, the patient and patient’s caregivers/family benefit when they can implement such a home program. This way, every day – day in and day out – goals can be addressed. Daily work can occur on important goals, setting up the opportunity for better outcomes from therapy.
- Daily practice on tasks allow for the advancement of higher/more difficult versions of tasks at a faster pace – which translates into functional gains and the meeting of goals. In meeting initial short-term goals, more difficult versions of tasks and skills would then be introduced.

“Why is it important to relay to the speech pathologist how the home program is being carried out?”

- When patients, or caregivers, ask questions in returning sessions after home programs have been initially assigned, this communicates to the speech pathologist that the patient has put into place the recommended home program, and that there is compliance with the recommendations. This allows for a positive prognostic indicator of a good chance of making improvements to achieve goals. It also demonstrates to the speech pathologist that there is support at home for carrying-out the home program. It also shows the patient has good motivation for reaching goals. The speech pathologist will be able to document these factors, which are important to insurance companies for the rationale of recommending continued services. Continued services will allow for additional time with the speech pathologist to guide the home program, but also to introduce new tasks that create the opportunity for new skills to be acquired.
- Relaying concerns, questions or requests for clarifications allow for the patient and family members to receive feedback that they are conducting the home program as indicated.
- There may be additional functional applications that can be recommended once the speech pathologist receives feedback on how the home program is being implemented. This can only occur if patients relay to the speech pathologist any barriers to performing the home program or special challenges.