



CARE TRANSITIONS A personal success story

Keeping people healthy after a hospital stay

“Members are grateful and appreciate what I do. The support, they often say, is literally lifesaving.”

—Gloria Denson
New Directions' Case Manager

On-site case management

7 New Directions' case managers visit

12* of Alabama's largest psychiatric hospitals every day

With the goal to increase scheduled follow-up appointments, improve coordination of care and reduce readmissions.

*Hospitals include:
St. Vincent's East, Grandview, Huntsville, Decatur, Crestwood, Brookwood, UAB, DCH, Bryan Whitfield, Mobile Infirmary, Baypointe, Eastpointe

Keeping people healthy after a hospital stay

Gloria Denson, New Directions' case manager in Alabama, walks into the University of Alabama Hospital (UAB) each day with one goal in mind: Guide members to the care they need when they leave the hospital, so they don't have to come back.

"My role is to be an advocate for members during and after their hospital stay," says Denson. "I kind of quarterback – meaning I communicate with the hospital case manager, the member's psychiatrist, physician, and family caregivers – to make sure everyone plays their role in creating a smooth transition of care for the member. I also confirm that the member has a follow-up appointment scheduled within seven days of discharge."

A trip to the hospital can be a scary event for patients and their families. And that's especially true for people admitted because of a drug overdose, a suicide attempt or a severe mental crisis. However, leaving the hospital can often be just as scary. So much so that members sometimes tell Denson they don't want to leave.

"Members and their family are usually apprehensive before discharge, so I talk about their concerns and the importance of attending follow-up care appointments," says Denson. "We discuss their treatment plan and develop a crisis plan to prevent a readmission. We go over things such as, do you understand your medication dosages? Do you have a list of emergency contacts and phone numbers? Can you get to your appointments? These face-to-face conversations usually allay anxiety about going home and also help me understand what level of case management the member needs after discharge."

"We've found that when a behavioral health case manager meets face to face with a member during a hospital stay, something really changes," says Nanci Warren, regional clinical director in Alabama. Direct interaction, as opposed



Gloria Denson in front of UAB hospital.

to the phone, makes a big difference in how members with mental health conditions react, respond and take ownership of their care plan once they leave the hospital.

The team-centered, on-site case management approach to improving a member's transition of care is showing positive impact. New Directions sends seven case managers to visit 12 of Alabama's largest psychiatric hospitals each day.

Since the on-site program began in 2015, more members are leaving the hospital with follow-up appointments scheduled within seven days of their discharge. Members who have a 7 day follow up as part of a supported discharge plan are less likely to readmit.

"Members are grateful and appreciate what I do," says Denson. "Many tell me how glad they are to have Blue Cross insurance. The support, they often say, is literally lifesaving."

Denson has worked as a therapist for 15 years across various settings. What she's doing now is really rewarding.

"I love being an advocate for others," she says. "Helping improve a patient's transition points, which are so often the weakest links in the chain of care, makes me realize I'm right where I need to be."

To learn how your organization can benefit from New Directions' case management programs, call 855-340-6297 or visit ndbh.com.



About New Directions

Founded in 1995, New Directions helps people live healthy, balanced lives. The fast-growing health care company provides managed behavioral health care services, employee assistance programs (EAPs) organizational consulting and health coaching to large regional health plans, Fortune 100 companies, employers and labor groups. For more information, visit ndbh.com.