



Public Summary

March 2015

This report uses newly acquired physician billing data to examine the rates of 7- and 30-day physician follow-up in Alberta and Saskatchewan. It contains information by province and health region, as well as on patient, physician and hospital/community factors affecting follow-up rates.

Additional Resources

The following companion products are available on **CIHI's website**:

- Report
- Data tables
- Stakeholder notification

Talk to Us

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At the heart of data



Canadian Institute
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Does physician follow-up reduce complications after release from hospital?

Physician Follow-Up After Hospital Discharge: Progress in Meeting Best Practices

Following up with their doctors helps patients transition smoothly from the hospital to the community, and provides an opportunity for physicians to learn what occurred in hospital and to see whether their patients are progressing as expected.

Follow-up contributes to improved continuity of care, which has many benefits, including fewer medical errors and improved communication between care providers. Follow-up can also encourage patients to take an active role in their health care through their daily choices surrounding medication, nutrition and observing complications of their condition.

This report on the topic focuses on patients in Alberta and Saskatchewan with acute myocardial infarction (AMI), heart failure (HF) or chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD).

Key findings

- The majority of patients (77% to 92%) saw a physician within a month after discharge.
- Patients discharged from small or remote hospitals, who lived in lower-income communities or who had reduced access to physicians in general were less likely to see a physician post-discharge, compared with patients discharged from larger hospitals or urban centres, particularly within the first 7 days after discharge.
- Follow-up visits increased when patients had a physician they were familiar with, especially for patients with HF or COPD.
- At least one-third of patients saw a physician within 7 days of discharge. Physician follow-up rates were higher for patients with AMI.