CASE STUDY

Building capacity, not beds: UW Health leverages hospital at home to improve throughput

The vision

UW Health, a large academic medical center in Wisconsin, needed to expand inpatient capacity without investing in new facilities. The organization had built a high-performing hospital at home program that delivered strong outcomes, but it operated at only three to four patients daily. Leaders sought new ways to improve capacity and unlock greater financial value from the program.

Co-creating the solution

As part of broader financial improvements, UW Health partnered with Chartis to scale home-based hospital care as high-quality lower-cost capacity initiative. The root barrier to realizing full value was a staffing paradox: Leadership was reluctant to approve new staff until census proved demand, but census couldn't rise without staff.

Chartis helped UW Health develop a cost-avoidance business case that justified investing in 13.5 clinical and support staff before projected growth could be realized. The team redesigned the care model to strengthen Emergency Department (ED) referrals and expand existing referral pathways.

Believe in better

UW Health now has a scalable hospital at home operation that relieves inpatient capacity pressure, enhances outcomes, and improves patient satisfaction. Daily care huddles, expanded admission hours, and new referral pathways continue to drive occupancy. By reaching a sustainable scale, the health system has positioned hospital at home to create capacity while delivering care at a lower cost per patient day than comparable in-facility settings.

> *"By redesigning our care model and scaling home-based-hospital care, UW Health tripled average daily census in one year. We expect to realize $6.6 million in system value through cost avoidance and capacity backfill as we expand access and continue to deliver high-quality care and improve patient experiences for the communities we serve."*
>
> – **UW Health**
> *Robin Lankton, MPH CHE*
> *President, UW Health ACO, Inc.*
> *Vice President, Population Health*

Building to better

Organizations scaling hospital at home as a financial performance lever should:

- Invest in staffing ahead of census growth to break scaling barriers
- Align clinical and financial teams around program value
- Integrate ED workflows and referral pathways to drive volume

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CHARTIS

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