



## Early Supported Hospital Discharge Improves Outcomes After a Stroke

**A Not-for-Profit  
Homecare Provider**

**JCAHO Accredited**

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Stroke patients who are discharged early from the hospital and who receive home-based rehabilitation promptly afterwards are more likely to be independent than those who receive conventional care, states a study recently published in *The Lancet* (*Lancet* February 5, 2005; 365: 501-6). Peter Langhorne, et al, combined results from 11 trials, involving 1,597 cases. They compared conventional hospital based care with programs designed to accelerate discharge by involving community-based care including physician supervision, physical therapy, speech therapy, and medical nursing. The investigators found that those who were discharged early with support had statistically fewer deaths and reduced dependency. By providing home-based rehabilitation and other services described in these investigations, **High Country Home Health can help your local patients realize the improved results described in this study.**

Langhorne and colleagues found that stroke patients involved in programs focusing on early discharge through home-based care had an average

length of stay (LOS) 8 days shorter than comparison groups. The subgroup of severe stroke patients were released an average of 28 days earlier. **The homecare groups proved six percent more likely to regain independence.**

Five of the 11 trials reported an economic analysis. All five concluded that the savings gained from reduced LOS outweighed the costs of community-based programs such as home health. In the U.S., hospitals would benefit from Early Supported Discharge (ESD) programs because they increase bed availability and because Medicare payment systems strongly reward hospital efficiency.

This study did not state that patients should skip inpatient rehabilitation. On the contrary, best results have been achieved when patients have received expert inpatient rehabilitation followed promptly by home-based rehabilitation. In commentary published by *The Lancet*, Dr. Ronald Meijer states that admission to ESD services will be the optimum choice for patients who:

- **would benefit from learning skills in the actual home instead of trying to carry over learning from a facility to the actual home**
- no longer need the medical and nursing treatment that **only** a hospital can provide
- have moderate stroke severity
- can return home because of professional care and/or family support
- need rehabilitation treatment that can be provided at home
- might find the combination of traveling to an outdoor service with exercise to be too tiring

Call on **High Country Home Health** to make this academic observation a reality for your patients in Watauga, Ashe, & Alleghany counties. High Country's physical therapists will promptly begin home based rehabilitation programs that identify individual needs and focus on skills important to each individual patient's home environment. High Country can also send nurses for medication review, speech therapists, and nurse aides to provide ADL support. These services make more efficient discharge and more context specific learning possible for patients suffering from stroke and many other maladies.

### **JCAHO Certified for Both Home Health & Hospice**

JCAHO certification is optional for Medicare certified home health and hospice agencies. High Country maintains this certification so referring physicians can have ongoing assurance that High Country is committed to quality of care for you and your patients.



**Use High Country Home Health to decrease LOS and improve your patient's independence.**

**Please tell your patients about  
High Country Home Health & Hospice.**