

# Northwestern Medicine Valley West Hospital Celebrates Homeward Healing Program

*New program helps patients transition from hospital to home*

The first year of a program at Northwestern Medicine Valley West Hospital aimed at helping patients transition from hospital to home is a great success according to hospital leaders. Patients and staff recently gathered at Valley West to celebrate the first anniversary of the Homeward Healing Swing Bed program. 44 patients have benefited from the program over the past year.

The Homeward Healing program is for patients who need short-term, comprehensive, skilled healthcare services after an acute stay in the hospital. Instead of going directly home or to a skilled nursing facility, patients remain at or can be transferred to Valley West Hospital for additional care that is not easily provided in the home. Services include physical, occupational, speech and respiratory therapy; wound care management; nutritional therapy and IV antibiotic therapy that does not qualify for home care.



“The care that our patients are receiving in the hospital and the education our team provides at discharge is setting up patients for success when they go home,” said Beth Mosher RN, MSN, and FNP-C, director of clinical & administrative operations at Northwestern Medicine Valley West Hospital. “The readmission rate for our Homeward Healing patients at Valley West has been zero-percent compared to over 24-percent at skilled nursing facilities.”

The average length of stay in the Homeward Healing Program is 10 days, compared to 26 days at a skilled nursing facility, according to a study of Illinois Critical Access Hospitals conducted by the Center for Governmental Studies at Northern Illinois University.

According to Mosher, patients in the Valley West Hospital program benefit from a low patient-to-nurse ratio, registered nurses on the unit 24/7, onsite hospital resources and private rooms.

“Patients often comment on the family feel of Valley West Hospital,” said Mosher. “Our staff has more time to spend one-on-one developing relationships with patients.”

Following a surgery to remove a benign growth, George Prickett, of Sycamore, was treated for 10 days in the Homeward Healing program. He required intravenous antibiotics that needed to be administered in a hospital setting three times a day. Going back and forth from home to hospital would have been very difficult during his recovery.

“At first, I had reservations about ten days in the hospital, but based on my other options, it was the way to go. And once we said ‘yes, let’s do it’ I have never been sorry that we did,” said Prickett. “Everyone was so nice and caring. I was under constant observation. If I had pain they looked into it right away. If I was running a fever, the doctor was there to manage it. The program was outstanding.”

The average age of the Homeward Healing patients at Valley West Hospital during their first year was 75, with the youngest being 45 and the oldest 101. The most common types of referrals have been for bone fractures, surgical recovery, respiratory therapy and diabetes. Patients have been from a wide service area including Aurora, Big Rock, Earlville, Hinckley, Kingston, Lee, Leland, Maple Park, Newark, Plano, Rochelle, Serena, Shabonna, Somonauk, Sugar Grove, Sycamore, and Yorkville.

To learn more about the Northwestern Medicine Valley West Hospital Homeward Healing Swing Bed Program call 815-748-6803 or visit <https://www.nm.org/conditions-and-care-areas/rehabilitation-services/homeward-healing-swing-bed-program>.

**PHOTO:** Katherine Baie-Michelle McGuane-Jay Anderson Valley West Swing Bed - Katherine Baie (left), of Hinckley, was thrilled to see Michelle McGuane, the patient care technician who cared for her at Northwestern Medicine Valley West Hospital, and the hospital’s president Jay Anderson (right), at a celebration for the Homeward Healing program.