

## **ABSTRACT**

**Background:** The purpose of this research project was to determine what criteria acute care hospitals within the San Gabriel Valley use when referring senior patients to non-medical home care companies upon discharge. There was much anecdotal evidence suggesting significant gaps in hospitals' understanding of the non-medical home care industry, as well as pitfalls patients may encounter due to the unregulated state of the industry in California. This study was built and conducted using a needs assessment research model, to establish the state of hospital understanding regarding home care and the protocols used to assess home care agencies.

**Objectives:** The major objective of this research was to serve as a pilot study to determine whether local discharge planning practices and attitudes suffer from the same deficiencies as discovered in the literature review.

**Methods:** Surveys were provided to ten hospitals within the San Gabriel Valley, with facility size ranging from 49 to 453 patient beds. Data was analyzed using descriptive and correlational tests.

**Results:** A number of results showing statistical significance. An example of this study's findings shows that while 100% of responding hospitals create and provide patients with lists of homecare companies, none of these respondents screen, and 80% do not provide patients with tools to screen, the companies whose info they provide.

**Conclusions:** Hospitals were largely unaware that non-medical homecare is not regulated within California, the risks associated with hiring "registries", and that seniors prefer to receive care at home versus in a facility. It was clear from the research that hospitals need education on current realities in the local homecare industry, in order to avoid placing fragile seniors at further risk. Future interventions based on these findings will include: development and replication of the study survey with a larger, diverse sample to increase external validity, provide data driven education to hospital case management departments, and education of the senior population to the specific risks they may encounter when entering a contract with a homecare company.