

# HEALTH MATTERS

## Ensuring The Care America's Patients Need

(NAPSA)—A coalition of health care industry organizations is working together to make sure patients, especially older Americans, get the care they need when making a transition from one health care setting to another.

Together with health care industry organizations, the coalition, known as the National Transitions of Care Coalition (NTOCC), explores various ways to improve transitional care.

Transitions in care settings include moving patients from primary care to specialty physicians; within the hospital, it also includes patients moving from the emergency department to various departments such as surgery or intensive care; or when patients are discharged from the hospital and go home or to assisted-living arrangements or skilled-nursing facilities.

These transitions can result in redundant or conflicting information that can create serious health issues for patients, their caregivers and their families.

The current health care system often fails to meet the needs of many diverse patient populations during these transitions because care is rushed and responsibility is not centralized. There's often little communication between care settings and providers.

Also, experts say that too much responsibility is placed on patients and families in coordinating follow-up care. Many families do not understand the complicated health care system they must navigate for follow-up care.

There's a growing awareness among health care professionals and government leaders that the nation's health care system must



**New solutions are being proposed for the lack of communication in the treatment of patients who switch health care settings.**

work to improve the coordination of care to improve patient safety and quality of care for transitioning patients and make tools available to the health care industry.

The NTOCC is chaired and coordinated by the Case Management Society of America (CMSA) and sponsored by sanofi-aventis U.S., which supports the coalition in its efforts to address complex issues such as health literacy, patient safety and nonadherence.

“Patients are at the center of all we do,” said Tim Rothwell, chairman, Group Pharmaceutical Activities, sanofi-aventis U.S. “We believe the work of this coalition will play a vital role for health care professionals, patients and caregivers.”

The NTOCC brings together leaders and health care participants in 26 participating associations to discuss this issue and to find realistic solutions. One proposed solution is for caseworkers to manage and coordinate care.

To learn more about how to help, visit [www.ntocc.org](http://www.ntocc.org).