

## Nurse Practitioners Save Billions For SNFs

Over the next 10 years, \$166 billion in federal health care spending could be saved by reducing the need for people living in nursing facilities to be admitted to a hospital, according to a new report from UnitedHealth Group's Center for Health Reform & Modernization. The report points to its institutional special needs plan, Evercare, as the source of the savings.

"Based on actual results of our Evercare [plans], we estimate savings from the wider application of this model, based on a five-year phase-in period before all eligible institutionalized Medicare beneficiaries were in receipt of similar care coordination support,"

the report says.

According to Simon Stevens, executive vice president and director of the center, the Evercare program's utilization of advanced nurse practitioners is a key component of this savings. The data are "very clear that by running programs like the Evercare program, using advanced nurse practitioners, it is possible to reduce the rate of hospital admissions by between 50 percent and 70 percent," Stevens said during a news conference.

Stevens adds that the center has identified "the right clinical support that people in nursing homes need from advanced nurse practitioners in order to reduce their rates of avoidable

hospital admissions."

The paper provides policy makers and health care leaders with a range of "real world" savings options, based on empirical data and actual results from a selection of UnitedHealth Group programs.

Also identified in the paper is approximately \$55 billion in savings from reducing seniors' avoidable readmissions to hospitals, partly by providing transitional care support, which includes follow-up with patients after leaving the hospital through monitoring of recovery progress and supporting adherence to discharge plans and recommended medical care.

— Meg LaPorte