

Increasing the Value of Rehabilitative Therapy Delivery at Home

Post-pandemic, broader and more acute levels of at-home care are becoming widely recognized as viable delivery models — and at-home delivery is quickly gaining traction among clinicians and patients.

In response, rehabilitative clinicians are exploring new ways to meet patient demand and improve access to care without compromising on quality. Providers of physical, occupational and speech therapies (PT/OT/SP) are leaning into the burgeoning trend of moving more care to the home for a number of reasons.

First and foremost, their services are precisely what the market needs as we recover from the pandemic and as a large portion of the population begins to age into higher-needs care. This growing population also wants to “age in place,” further emphasizing the fact that at-home care is a huge growth market.

Whether these therapists are looking to expand their existing at-home services or enter this market for the first time, they must factor several strategic considerations into their plans.

This white paper will explore:

- 1 The Sweeping Rise in Healthcare at Home
- 2 Three Successful Therapy Models Delivering Care at Home
- 3 The Multi-Faceted Benefits of Delivering Therapy at Home
- 4 Considerations for Entering the At-Home Therapy Market

The Sweeping Rise in Healthcare at Home

Patient Demand for Care at Home

The consumer preference to age-in-place was established long before the pandemic.¹ Plus, the surge in the aging population means that by 2030, a projected 20% of the U.S. population will be over the age of 65.²

Those two factors alone are enough to disrupt the market, but the pandemic accelerated the pace. Patient demand for care at home is now more prevalent, especially given the fact that COVID-19 left many individuals hesitant to visit a clinic or outpatient care facility for therapy, ongoing care, and other treatments.

In fact, a survey conducted by Luna, a company that delivers outpatient physical therapy-on-demand, revealed that **92% of patients who were offered therapy at home preferred that option.**³



Patients are looking for clinicians that can deliver care at home. In part because they don't want to:

- Spend time and money coordinating transportation
- Travel to a care facility, especially one outside of their local community
- Navigate a crowded waiting room as they wait to see a physician
- Risk exposure to COVID-19 or other illnesses in a public setting

When executed correctly, the at-home approach reduces accessibility constraints, saves time and money, and ideally gives patients early, proactive access to post-acute care.

Risk contractors are shifting patients down the chain at a rapid pace, and the home is the preferred discharge destination for patients, payers, and hospital systems.⁴ The accelerated transition to home healthcare is driven by:

- Lasting effects of COVID-19
- Patient preference to receive ongoing care in their home
- Rising demand for value-based care
- Potential to bundle payments in other facilities

Cross-Market Trends Toward Care at Home

Hospital-at-home

During the pandemic, health services made a drastic shift toward the home setting due to concerns about spreading the virus or losing contact with loved ones due to facilities' strict visitor restrictions.

Hospital-at-home care treats patients with complex care needs — often ones who required multiple nursing visits and physician engagement each day.⁸ Hospital clinicians rely on clinical technology and analytics tools to communicate with nurses in the home and ensure patients receive the same quality of care they would in a traditional hospital setting.

SNF-at-home

As skilled nursing facilities (SNFs) adjust to acuity shifts and increased transitions in patient care, the concept of SNF-at-home has grown in popularity and adoption.

The aim of SNF-at-home is to improve transitions of care for patients moving between different settings. It allows at-home providers to work with SNFs to identify patients that meet criteria for at-home care, then create a treatment plan to manage them in a home setting.⁹ This unified approach ensures continuity of care and patient safety, while also offering the comfort and convenience of at-home treatments.

Acuity Shifts in Rehabilitative Therapy

The rapid transition of patients from hospital to home care has led many SNFs to prioritize care for the sickest patients — those with more comorbidities or higher acuity than previously accepted.

In turn, Assisted/Independent Living (AL/IL) communities and other facilities are seeing ever-growing demand for onsite care. This has led to widespread therapy delivery reform, a shift in how long people stay in these facilities, and which patients are prioritized as right-fit for rehabilitative therapy.



As Jeff Clayton, CEO and Owner of Vertis Therapy — a provider of PT/OT/ST solutions for long-term care facilities, explains, this shift has led to increased acuities in AL/IL communities.

“AL/ILs previously had established criteria of independence for their residents. But in the last three to five years, I’ve seen acuity shift way up. I see full hip and knee replacements go straight from the hospital to an AL community or their home. In general, I see more dependent people, such as wheelchair users, in AL/IL, which I would have never seen five years ago.”

These facilities are increasing care capacity and beginning to provide more outpatient therapy support for their residents. This development speaks to the need for outcome-based care, giving therapists the flexibility to deliver various types of care across their client base.

Jeff also describes patient sentiment towards at-home therapy:

“At-home therapy creates more of an active, amenity-based environment compared to therapy in a hospital or SNF. There will always be a need for the skilled services SNFs provide for a certain population, but seniors who want to age-in-place are looking for more of an AL/IL setting, especially in the post-Covid marketplace.”

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JEFF CLAYTON
CEO and Owner



Three Successful Therapy Models Delivering Care at Home

With the upturn in the adoption of at-home care in provider and patient populations and the growing need for new avenues of care delivery, this approach to treatment poses a massive opportunity for therapy providers.

We spoke with experts at three organizations about their methods of at-home rehabilitative therapy delivery and their insights into the market as a whole:

Direct-to-Consumer: Luna

Luna is a technology company that has provided therapists with a flexible and modern opportunity to deliver care at home. With physical therapy being a demand-heavy market, Luna leveraged therapists’ surplus time to create better access to care.

When therapists gained more available hours to practice due to the volume decrease in SNFs post-PDPM, or wanted to improve their earning potential via the innovative moonlighting opportunity, Luna used their at-home delivery model to successfully match rising consumer demand for therapy services.

Luna delivers outpatient physical therapy-on-demand, without the need for formal referrals. Patients can simply:



Request care through the app or by calling Luna



Upload their insurance information



Match with a therapist at their convenience



When it's time to receive care, a qualified therapist can:



Visit the residence to provide in-person treatment



Provide updated Exercises in real time



Continue to provide follow up visits until discharge



Chat with patients between visits via the Luna app



"It's our goal to reimagine the physical therapy experience for patients, physicians, and therapists, ensuring we deliver exceptional care outside the clinic."

"From matching and routing algorithms that improve access to developing auto-charting that improves therapist efficiency, we shaped our technology to optimize therapist needs and solve real-world challenges."

PALAK SHAH | Luna's Head of Clinical Services 

Palak Shah, Head of Clinical Services, explains why Luna chose this innovative delivery model:

"It's our goal to reimagine the physical therapy experience for patients, physicians, and therapists, ensuring we deliver exceptional care outside the clinic."

Shah also explains that technology is the key to how her teams deliver a high level of care.

"From matching and routing algorithms that improve access to developing auto-charting that improves therapist efficiency, we shaped our technology to optimize therapist needs and solve real-world challenges."

Onsite in AL/IL Facilities: Vertis Therapy

In these facilities, therapy services can focus on a variety of outcomes. However, for Jessica Beaudry, Vice President of Operations and Co-owner of Vertis Therapy, the central goal remains the same:

"We're passionate about helping people age in place by staying proactive, rather than reactive. Our care delivery focuses on helping people stay at home with loved ones."

As Baby Boomers age into needing more health care services while extending the chance to remain independent, market demand for AL/IL facilities is multiplying across the country. Clinicians, facility operators, and patients are concerned not only with the location of care but the continuity of care as well.

"We're passionate about helping people age in place by staying proactive, rather than reactive. Our care delivery focuses on helping people stay at home with loved ones."

JESSICA BEAUDRY
VP of Operations and Co-owner



CEO and Owner Jeff Clayton explains the value of integrated care for AL/IL residents:

"We become a part of patients' daily care teams, offering daily health services on top of therapy to monitor patient conditions and follow up on concerns before incidents occur. We also partner with home health companies for continuity of care and ensure patients can work with the same team throughout treatment."

Hybrid At-Home: IncludeHealth

Hybrid, technology-based approaches to at-home therapy have also gained traction in recent years, as patients and clinicians look for ways to maximize their time and flexibility. Therapists are leveraging innovative models to deliver care in the best way possible, including IncludeHealth's dynamic approach to at-home care.

IncludeHealth uses a mix of highly specialized tools to deliver therapy to patients in a remote setting. Examples include::

- 3D cameras
- Sensor-based monitoring
- A.I. tracking

Plus, standard technologies like:

- Smartphones
- Tablets
- Computers

Anang Chokshi, Chief Clinical Officer, explains that, while these technologies are highly valuable, they shouldn't replace the human aspect of clinical care:



"Remote delivery relies on a mix of human design and technology. All-digital may work for a lot of people, but not all. The hybrid approach enables our clinicians to make the best call every time and gives them the tools they need to succeed remotely and in person."

ANANG CHOKSHI | IncludeHealth's Chief Clinical Officer



IncludeHealth also allows users to monitor their patients in the home and adjust their routine between in-person visits.

Chokshi explains, "When patients begin exercises at home, they will likely have questions about the treatment. Our approach enables clinicians to answer questions or follow up on concerns and gives them better visibility into patients' activities at home and how well they're responding to treatments."

The Multi-Faceted Benefits of Delivering Therapy at Home For Patients

Accessibility

According to our expert, Anang Chokshi, “only 10% of the people who need physical therapy actually receive it.”²This gap in access to care can occur for several reasons, from lack of transportation to regional availability of therapists. The disparity between available therapists and patients needing care builds frustration for both parties and results in poorer health outcomes.

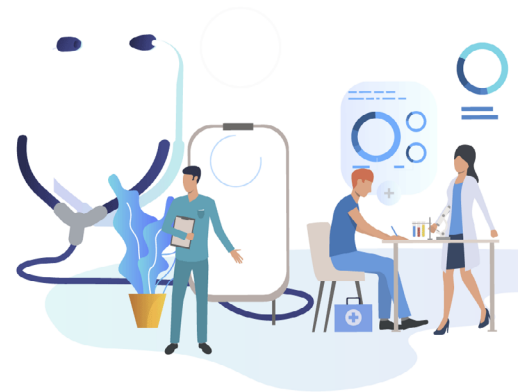
At-home care significantly improves accessibility by:

- Taking location and transportation out of the picture for patients
- Helping patients access care outside of traditional clinic hours
- Giving therapists control over their schedules so they can work more efficiently

Cost Savings

Each time patients visit a clinic, they pay for transportation and even lodging if they don't live near a care facility. At-home solutions offer financial flexibility, further improving patient access and treatment outcomes.

- At-home therapy delivery helps patients:
- Receive care on their schedule without taking extended time off work
- Save on the recurring expenses associated with getting to the location of care



For Therapists

Patient Visibility

At-home solutions that adopt app-based communication and monitoring between therapists and patients give treatment providers a new level of visibility throughout a patient's entire treatment and recovery process.

Rather than seeing patients only during in-person clinic visits, therapists can:

- Monitor qualitative responses to treatment with technology
- Reach out to their patients between visits to gather other critical details
- Inform future treatments or modify treatment plans between face-to-face visits

Schedule Flexibility

Like most clinicians, therapists are up against a constant time crunch when prioritizing patient care and scheduling appointments — whether in-office or on-site at a residence or care facility. However, the right at-home therapy delivery model can open new space in therapists' schedules and give them more control over how they spend their time with patients.

At-home delivery allows them to:

- Choose where and when they're available to deliver treatment
- Create their own daily, weekly, or monthly schedules
- Create new income opportunities and supplement in-clinic/facility incomes
- Spend more time with patients on a one-on-one basis

Patient Compliance

Traditional therapeutic models leave a lot of wiggle room for patients to drop off of their treatment exercises — whether intentionally or unintentionally — which can mean slower progress and poorer outcomes overall.

At-home or hybrid care can improve patient compliance by:

- Increasing access to care and reducing missed appointments
- Improving patient function and safety in their home environment
- Keeping them connected to clinicians throughout the entire treatment process
- Giving them gentle nudges and reminders to help them stay on track with treatments

For Senior Living Retirement Communities

Continuity of Care

Therapy providers can partner with home health agencies for continuity of care. Providers like Vertis Therapy use staffing contracts and other proactive measures that allow a core team to provide care, therapy, and other essential home health services from day one. This is particularly valuable in AL/IL communities, where therapists who have provided outpatient therapy care for a resident on campus are very well prepared to also provide care for a patient who is receiving services by a home health agency.

On-site continuity of care:

- Reduces confusion for patients, such as elders or those in memory care facilities
- Allows teams to work together to ensure the highest level of care for each patient

Cross-Functional Success

Therapists, home health professionals, and facility operators can integrate their services to deliver better outcomes and drive success across the board. According to Jeff Clayton, continuity of care services that merge home health, memory care, and therapy under one roof can improve treatment efficiency and create a less stressful experience for patients.

These dynamic offerings also:

- Attract new residents to participating facilities
- Build mutually beneficial partnerships across industries
- Help providers offer a more comprehensive range of services to each patient



Don't Survive, Thrive in Senior Living Care - What your OP Therapy Business Needs to Know



MARK MCDAVID
CEO
Seagrove



AVI FRIEDMAN
Co-Founder and COO
LINK



LUIS MONTES
Co-founder and
Managing Partner
HealthTek



KATE WARNOCK
Director, Communications
& Brand Strategy
forcura

Find Your Place in At-Home Rehabilitative Therapy

There are multiple business models and approaches to entering the at-home therapy market. Discover the business growth strategies your OP therapy business needs to know in this on-demand webinar.

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Considerations for Entering the At-Home Therapy Market

The combined market forces leading toward more care at home, combined with the innovative delivery models featured above, translate into an unprecedented opportunity for business growth. Here are some factors smart businesses must consider to have the best chance at success:



Tackling Conventional Legal Barriers

The legal aspect of conventional healthcare comes with a unique set of challenges and strict guidelines that require careful monitoring by clinicians and insurance providers. And as clinicians explore the viability of at-home therapy delivery, these challenges become even more nuanced.

While there's no one-size-fits-all solution for legal compliance, there are a few common threads among at-home therapy providers:

Reimbursement

Work with payers to identify new ways to succeed in a hybrid or remote model, whether through new payment models, flexible reimbursement guidelines, or a novel approach to reimbursement in the at-home space.

Medical Considerations

Establish the proper legal structure to bill for Medicare Beneficiaries at home. Seek legal counsel to set up your entity as a Rehab Agency or Professional Private Practice. Make sure to credential your providers and/or legal entity before you start billing.

Referrals and Payments

If your organization supports various payers, conduct research to identify critical Federal, state, and local factors before diving headfirst into payment models. Next, define a strategy to acquire patients. If in an AL/IL environment, what is your plan to market your services within that community to attract referrals and be proactive in your care delivery? If you'll provide services direct to consumers, how do you plan to reach them?

Billing and Documentation

Consider the logistics behind operating outside a brick-and-mortar location. Do you have the right systems in place for efficient scheduling, documentation, and billing when outside an office? Do your therapists have the tools they need to capture referrals and pass along essential information to your billing and compliance departments?

Championing Technology Adoption in Therapy Delivery

The pandemic revealed new opportunities for where care can be provided and helped providers realize their potential for growth outside of traditional institutions. And no matter which delivery model they choose to adopt, technology will be the primary driver of their success.

Clinicians and therapists need to understand that technology isn't their competitor. **Pure technology or hybrid models of care won't threaten their job. Rather, they will enable them to deliver better patient outcomes and use their valuable time more efficiently.**



At home care models are adjunct and complementary to in-clinic or in-facility care. The need to visit a clinic or institution such as a SNF is not going away. But the smart utilization of home care models opens new opportunities to deliver positive patient outcomes in a more cost-effective way.

It's all about **technology enablement, not technology replacement.** These solutions won't replace therapists or ask them to do less. Instead, they will enable them to do more and work more effectively. The technology behind these emerging solutions can help therapists lay a clear pattern for care and keep patients engaged in their own recovery.

Pure technology or hybrid models of care won't threaten their job. Rather, they will enable them to deliver better patient outcomes and use their valuable time more efficiently.

Empowering Staff and Patients with Innovative Technology

At-home solutions that adopt app-based communication and monitoring between therapists and patients give treatment providers a new level of visibility throughout a patient's entire treatment and recovery process.

Rather than seeing patients only during in-person clinic visits, therapists can:



Request care through the app



Upload their insurance information



Match with a therapist at their convenience

As demand increases, providers are taking advantage of the healthcare landscape and innovative technologies at their disposal to deliver at-home care.

Whether it's an app-based treatment model or a backend documentation system that saves therapists hours of time and paperwork, technology connects the dots between convenience and quality care for patients and clinicians alike.

The goal of each technology you implement should be to enable therapists to do what they do best — deliver care in the field, review charts, finalize documents, and share referrals — all with the tap or click of a button. Care Coordination technology solutions make it easier for providers inside and outside your organization to share clinical and administrative information with one another.

Technology enablement for these clinicians can look like:

- Cloud-based dashboards that automate workflows associated with referrals and onboarding new patients.
- HIPAA-secure mobile applications that help clinicians in the field easily complete ABN forms, capture documents, send insurance information for rapid verification of benefits, and obtain signatures without having to return to the office.
- Clinical records management that provides transparency into plans of care that still require physician signature, and e-signature tools to accelerate your sent-to-signed cycles.
- Analytics tools that evaluate your referral trends and anticipate how you'll need to allocate clinical staff.

What Comes Next?

The at-home therapy market is ripe for development—and clinicians, providers, and patients are actively searching for new ways to adopt this model of post-acute care. However, we shouldn't expect hybrid or remote treatments to replace the human aspect of care delivery.

Palak Shah of Luna puts it best: "At the end of the day, both in-clinic and at-home models are essential for success. In-person care isn't going anywhere; it's about extending those services and offering new options for patients and clinicians."

And no matter which model of at-home delivery clinicians and healthcare systems choose to adopt, it's clear that innovative technology will drive their growth.



"At the end of the day, both in-clinic and at-home models are essential for success. In-person care isn't going anywhere; it's about extending those services and offering new options for patients and clinicians."

PALAK SHAH | Luna's Head of Clinical Services 

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