It can be difficult for patients with serious illnesses to follow up with caregivers after hospitalization. To prevent lapses in care, MedStar Health is harnessing the power of technology at MedStar Good Samaritan Hospital by redefining our boundaries to provide effective, efficient care outside the hospital’s walls.

Through a program called PATCH (Palliative Telehealth Connecting to Home), a collaboration between palliative care, home health, and telehealth, patients receive a comprehensive clinic experience at home. The program monitors vital signs, symptoms, and medications and allows a video visit between palliative clinicians and patients with their families. Patients with a serious illness are invited to participate after a palliative care consultation if they are scheduled for home discharge.

During the program’s first 18 months, 60 patients, ranging from ages 30 to 91, were enrolled. Compared to pre-PATCH enrollment, readmissions decreased by 60 percent. “This demonstrates that when patients receive the comprehensive follow-up care they need at home, they are less likely to end up back in the hospital,” says Kathryn Walker, PharmD, senior clinical and scientific director of Palliative Care.

“When patients receive the comprehensive follow-up care they need at home, they are less likely to end up back in the hospital.” —Kathryn Walker, PharmD
The demand for skilled health care providers continues to grow. MedStar Health is partnering with Mercy High School, a Catholic college preparatory school for girls, to encourage students to test drive a career in medicine through a unique initiative launched in 2018 at MedStar Good Samaritan Hospital.

The Sister Agnese Neumann Scholars Program spans three academic years and is open to freshmen and rising sophomores. In the first year, students are exposed to diverse health care disciplines, including aging science, occupational and physical therapy, nursing, and community and public health. They’re also given skills training, including first responder education.

In the second year, students continue their skills training and attend at least six of MedStar Health’s professional development sessions at MedStar Good Samaritan Hospital. In year three, students work with a mentor in their specialty area of focus to construct an internship they will complete that summer.

Applicants must present a strong academic record to qualify. Currently 19 students are enrolled in the program, which honors the first chair of Mercy’s science department who went on to a career as a nurse practitioner.

“We expect that our students will become future leaders in health care,” says Mary Beth Lennon, president of Mercy High School. “This partnership allows us to respond to the strong demand for rigorous academic programs in the STEM fields,” she adds.

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2019 Community benefit contribution: $21.3M

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<th>Category</th>
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*Includes Medicaid assessments