

CARE EXTENDERS & CAREGIVERS FAQs

What is a care extender?

A care extender or caregiver is a person who delivers an unskilled service to a patient as identified by a registered therapist (physical therapist, occupational therapist, speech-language pathologist) and is a non-licensed individual.

Who can be a care extender?

Care extenders can include members of the agency's care team, family members or other persons connected to the patient in the home environment, as well as other outside providers.

When is a care extender or caregiver needed?

Utilization of care extenders and caregivers occurs when the need for continual reinforcement of an activity or a compensatory strategy or process is no longer be skilled in nature and may be implemented by someone other than a licensed clinician.

What are the benefits to utilizing care extenders and caregivers?

One benefit is more frequent and diverse delivery of the care plan. It also frees up skilled therapists to perform top-of-license activities during their scheduled visits. Care extender and caregiver utilization encourages the transition from skilled to unskilled interaction which is needed after a home-care episode is complete. Utilization of a care extender or caregiver provides an opportunity to assess the patient's ability to truly manage his or her health conditions in a long-term, successful fashion.

What are some ways PDGM offers a platform for alternative ways to provide therapy services?

By implementing caregivers and care extenders in more defined support roles through the use of telerehab and other remote support services. The provision of support by a care extender or caregiver may be conducted in concert with ongoing skilled therapy intervention or a post-therapy discharge.

What are some things care extenders and caregivers should be aware of when tending to a patient?

They must be aware of any risk factors that may be present while performing practice exercises or other activities on an aging population. In addition, they must demonstrate the ability to monitor a patient's performance and provide support or cues as determined by the skilled clinician.

What are some activities care extenders and caregivers perform with patients?

Care extenders or caregivers may be utilized when a patient needs to practice repetitive exercises to improve strength, ROM, flexibility, endurance or other aspects of functional mobility.

What are some other methods of care delivery under PDGM?

Virtual visits or remote monitoring. For example, phone calls or video chat sessions utilizing HIPPA-compliant technology that involve the patient and/or family member may occur. These phone calls or video chat sessions may include items such as discussion about and demonstration of a HEP, reinforcement of recommended safety strategies, follow-up after a fall or other change in condition, discussion of medication-regimen adherence or changes, the ordering or receipt of DME or follow-up after medical appointments.

Questions about this information? Contact AskAtHome@AegisTherapies.com or visit our Resource Center for more information at [AegisTherapies.com/Resources](https://www.AegisTherapies.com/Resources).