

7 Keys to an Effective RPM Program



VitalSight[™]

Remote Patient Monitoring

By

OMRON

Table of Contents

- **Introduction**
- **The Value of RPM**
- **7 Criteria for a Successful RPM Program**
 1. Low-Risk Setup
 2. Easy Patient Engagement
 3. Easy-to-Use Devices and Onboarding
 4. Medically Reliable and Proven
 5. Uses Existing Clinical Workflows
 6. Security, Privacy, and Trust
 7. Reimbursement Cash Flow
- **About VitalSight™ by OMRON**

Introduction

The Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) began covering remote physiologic monitoring, also known as remote patient monitoring (RPM), for blood pressure per 2019 hypertension diagnosis and treatment guidelines.* In fact, RPM-specific reimbursement codes had been released to pay healthcare organizations for implementing RPM prior to the COVID-19 pandemic.



In the wake of COVID-19, some requirements for RPM were made even easier for individuals to receive care virtually. Clinicians are now able to order and bill RPM services via CPT codes 99453, 99454, 99457, and 99458, to which CMS has fee-for-service-style reimbursement dollars available for medical practices providing RPM services. Many commercial payers are looking to follow suit.

At the same time, a confluence of developments is paving the way for more widespread adoption of RPM.

- **Remote care is more accepted by both patients and clinicians**
- **Devices are becoming less costly**
- **Patients have better access to digital connectivity**
- **RPM reimbursements are available**

Medical practices now have a unique opportunity to benefit from these trends. However, not all RPM programs are created equal. This eBook identifies seven key criteria for an effective RPM implementation and gives recommendations for ensuring your vendor meets these criteria.

* [Guidelines](#) developed by the American College of Cardiology and American Heart Association Task Force on Clinical Practice Guidelines

The Value of RPM

Millions of patients live with the challenges of uncontrolled stage 2 hypertension, with a high risk of heart attack and stroke. Prior to RPM, there were few options for monitoring these patients and controlling their conditions at home. With the growth of new connected technology, patients can be monitored and cared for remotely, putting new opportunities within reach for medical practices and these vulnerable patients.

RPM adoption was growing before COVID. The pandemic accelerated interest in remote technologies for healthcare just as it did for business organizations. Moreover, RPM is increasingly becoming an essential component of value-based care efforts for many medical practices. When managing large patient populations, these practices must often risk scaling the tracking of patients outside the walls of their offices. An RPM program can allow clinicians to not only monitor their patients' treatment plans from a distance, but also generate revenue by means of a value-based care agreement.

Medical practices should also consider the growth in the RPM space. Providing RPM services can keep you competitive with the number of notable direct-to-consumer entrants (e.g., Walmart, Walgreens, and CVS) and sizeable tech companies (e.g., Amazon, Google, and Apple), as well as a myriad of startups.

RPM Solutions Are Maturing

Medical practices now have a wide variety of proven solutions to enter the RPM space. Offerings in the market have matured across three main areas.

More Devices

There is a proliferation of consumer remote monitoring devices. Initial awareness of these devices was generated when Apple and Google integrated health tracking into their consumer devices. However, hundreds of companies have now developed RPM devices that are registered with the FDA as medical, which provide medically relevant data to clinicians.

Cost-Effective Price Point

As traditionally happens with technology, the sharp increase of clinically relevant remote monitoring devices combined with reimbursement means that these devices are now at a price that makes it feasible for a larger number of patients to be monitored at home.

Easy Connectivity

Beyond FDA clearance, the biggest change to these devices is improved data flow from patient to clinician. Built-in connectivity greatly facilitates the capture of data and its transmission to the medical practice's remote patient monitoring platform.

7 Criteria for a Successful RPM Program

1 Low-Risk Setup

You should be able to start your RPM program with very little financial risk.

In the current environment of healthcare evolution, shared risk is a reasonable and realistic expectation. To be competitive, your vendor should be offering a low-risk program with these key features.

No Setup Costs

Medical practices and RPM vendors must work together for programs to succeed. A close working partnership is ideal. This should not, however, mean you must pay upfront to initiate an implementation.

Flexible Device Costs

Some practices may want to purchase RPM devices they can easily give to patients. However, it is not necessary for you to purchase devices to make your RPM program work. That expense can be paid through reimbursements. Your vendor should be flexible depending on your needs.

Even with these features, it is important to remember that low-risk is not no-risk. Practices should thoroughly evaluate every aspect of the proposed program and understand the cost-benefit ratio. When calculating benefits, do not forget to consider the non-monetary advantages of RPM to your patients and the practice.

2 Easy Patient Engagement

Engaging the right patients to an RPM program is essential to success.

Looking for the right patients at the right time is critical for establishing an RPM program. Assessing a patient's willingness to participate and take accountability for their heart health management provides the basis of the care continuum. In some instances, your vendor may support patient engagement - consider:

- ❑ **Does your vendor help with patient engagement or are you expected to do it all?**
- ❑ **Is their marketing generic or does it target specific patient personas to ensure patient engagement is effective?**
- ❑ **Do their marketing materials clearly convey the value patients will receive from participation in the program?**

7 Criteria for a Successful RPM Program

3 Easy-to-Use Devices and Onboarding

Difficult technology compromises patient satisfaction and retention.

A successful program depends on ease of use. This should be a top priority for selecting your vendor.

Easy Setup

It is imperative that patients are able to use the devices on their own. Difficult setup could lead to frustration and poor patient satisfaction. Ongoing technical issues could cause patients to abandon the program.

Easy Connectivity

Getting the data from RPM devices and transmitting it to clinicians is fundamental to the purpose of remote patient monitoring. Connecting devices and keeping them connected should be simple and seamless.

Easy Support

Medical practices are busy and generally lack the skills to provide technical support for remote medical devices. Your RPM vendor should support patients with any technical questions they have with devices or processes at home.



7 Criteria for a Successful RPM Program

4 Medically Reliable and Proven

Your RPM vendor must have experience creating medically relevant, FDA-cleared medical devices.

With the proliferation of remote patient monitoring devices, it is imperative to vet the ones you will be using. Verify these four areas to ensure your RPM vendor provides reliable, proven devices.

Registered with the FDA

In the US, registering with the FDA as a medical device means an RPM device has been reviewed and approved for its intended purpose. While registration may not be required in all cases, make sure you carefully question any RPM vendor that says it is not necessary.

Medically Relevant

Many “health” devices marketed to consumers monitor activities such as steps, which don’t require registration with the FDA. Those types of data are not considered medically relevant. To ensure quality monitoring of patients and RPM reimbursement, the devices used in your program should be providing medically relevant data that helps clinicians improve patient care.

Reliability

Devices in patients’ homes can be subjected to wear and tear and not present in clinical settings. RPM devices must be robust and perform reliably in the home environment.



Breadth of Devices

Most RPM programs require more than one device to appropriately monitor the patients’ health. Make sure your RPM vendor offers the full breadth of devices you may need and that they connect seamlessly with the same quality across all devices.

Ensuring these four areas will provide clinicians with data they trust, an important element for success.

Tip

A helpful resource is the Validated Device Listing (VDL). The American Medical Association (AMA) convened experts with relevant technical and clinical practice expertise to develop a set of criteria (VDL Criteria) to help determine which automated blood pressure (BP) measurement devices in the United States have been validated for clinical accuracy. The VDL Criteria were refined and finalized with input from key stakeholders, including clinicians, health care organizations, BP device manufacturers, and the Food and Drug Administration (FDA).

“The data from the VitalSight RPM system offer the ability to analyze quality, physiologic data for successful treatment and management for the long haul and potentially before a cardiac event puts a patient in the ER.”

Ajay A. Madhani, MD, FACP



7 Criteria for a Successful RPM Program

5 Uses Existing Clinical Workflows

The RPM program must integrate with existing clinical workflow and allow clinician customization.

Time pressures and burnout are continuing realities for clinical staff. For RPM to enable improved patient care and outcomes, it must integrate into existing clinical workflows and provide practical assistance for clinical tasks that saves time.

Customization is the key to workflow integration. For many clinicians, the EHR is the system of record for patients and integrating with it seamlessly is critical to adoption. Others may want this information available on a dashboard where care managers can follow up.

“With VitalSight, you will receive heart data regularly, in almost real-time that includes automatic notifications for readings based on thresholds set for the individual needs of the patient.”

Ajay A. Madhani, MD, FACP

Ask these questions to evaluate how well an RPM program performs in this regard.

- Are RPM devices sent automatically to patients without the need for medical staff to be involved?**
- Can clinicians order the RPM program and devices from within the vendor’s system?**
- Does the EHR or dashboard have enrollment prompts to remind clinicians to sign patients up to the program?**
- Are device options available for various patient types?**
- Is clinically relevant data used to trigger alerts prompting clinicians to address abnormal or noteworthy findings?**
- Is clinical data stored in the patient chart for future reference even when an alert is not triggered?**
- Can clinicians set their own customizable alert thresholds?**
- Does the RPM program have fully automated billing reports?**

Therefore, it is important to identify the appropriate person to review and respond to alerts from the RPM data collected. Nurses or care managers can often respond effectively to alerts for measurements outside of set parameters and can escalate to clinicians as needed.

7 Criteria for a Successful RPM Program

6 Security, Privacy, and Trust

If patients do not trust you to maintain their privacy, they will not share their data.

Security and privacy are crucial pillars of any RPM program. Because the addition of connected remote devices heightens the opportunity for a data breach, minimizing vulnerability is key to the success of your implementation. In addition, it protects your organization against compromised reputation, fines, lawsuits, and HIPAA penalties.

HIPAA Compliance Isn't Enough

HIPAA compliance is essential. However, it is not enough to ensure your RPM program is secure. Security must go beyond HIPAA and a signed BAA to ensure your third-party vendor is appropriately securing devices and the data collected. Ask your vendor for full details of their security procedures to confirm they will adequately safeguard patient data and protect your practice.



7 Criteria for a Successful RPM Program

7 Reimbursement Cash Flow

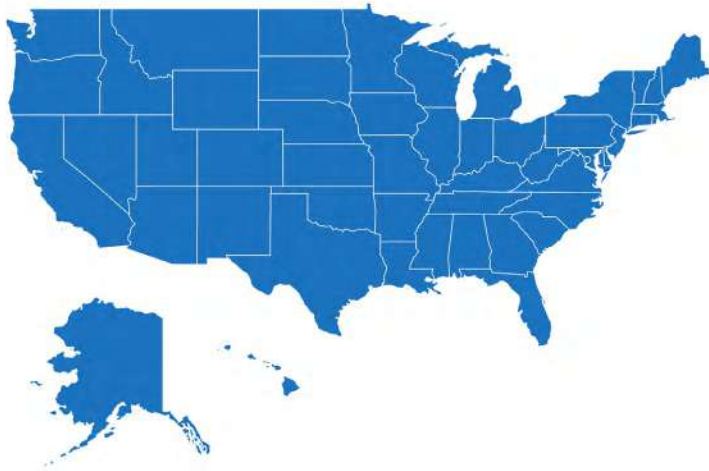
RPM reimbursement codes are available today.

Unlike other value-based care efforts, RPM has active Medicare and Medicare Advantage reimbursement codes to pay for the RPM services you provide. These are the four main codes available for RPM:

- ✓ 99453
- ✓ 99454
- ✓ 99457
- ✓ 99458

Full details on [CMS.gov](https://www.cms.gov).

Find the reimbursements available in your state on this [map](#).



Example

Here is the potential reimbursement for a 12-month period for a practice seeing four patients per day, 20 days per month.

	Totals*
New Patient Signups for Year	600
Average Monthly New Patient Signups	50
Gross Revenue	\$238,477
Average Monthly Gross Revenue	\$27,934

*Based on typical account reimbursement claims and patient engagement.

Quality Incentive Payments and Other Value-Based Care

Along with existing reimbursement codes, RPM programs can often support other value-based care programs. For example, this may include quality incentive payments, accountable care organizations, or other commercial value-based care efforts.



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About VitalSight™ by OMRON

The VitalSight service starts by sending a digital blood pressure monitor from OMRON, the #1 doctor- and pharmacist-recommended brand of home blood pressure monitors and, if desired, a digital body weight scale. Through a HIPAA-compliant, cellular-connected data hub, these devices keep patients connected to their clinicians for proactive care.

Visit our website to learn more about the VitalSight by OMRON solution and to connect with one of our specialists. Contact us at 877-297-9776 or vitalsight-OHI@omron.com.



This eBook has been written in collaboration with John Lynn, Founder and Chief Editor of **Healthcare IT Today**.