Mass General Brigham

Development and Implementation of a 24/7 APP On Call Leadership Model in a Rapidly Expanding Home Hospital Program

Allison Ruhe, PA-C

BACKGROUND

Home Hospital programs have rapidly expanded nationwide over the last 5+ years and are considered one of the most important care delivery innovations in inpatient hospital level of care. The growth of Home Hospital programs is largely tied to the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services Acute Hospital Care at Home waiver launched in 2020 during the COVID-19 pandemic and recently extended as part of the Consolidated Appropriations Act in 2026 permitting hospitals to provide high acuity inpatient hospital level of care in patients' homes through 2030. Mass General Brigham Healthcare at Home's Home Hospital program was established in 2016 and is one of the largest and most established programs in the country with a capacity of 60+ patient beds and >10,000 patient admissions since 2022 recruiting patients from Mass General, Brigham and Women's, Brigham and Women's Faulkner, Newton Wellesley, and Salem hospitals. As patient census, geographic reach, and APP staff FTE increased (including the establishment of nocturnist and surgical service lines), informal off-hours APP leadership coverage contributed to staffing inefficiencies, concerns regarding APP staff job satisfaction and retention, and unclear escalation pathways. In response, in 2025 the APP leadership team developed and implemented a 24/7 Advanced Practice Provider On Call (APPOC) leadership model establishing clearly defined operational and clinical support responsibilities. These responsibilities included management of sick calls, real-time staffing redistribution based on fluctuations in patient census as well as rounding and admitting support needs, representation at daily safety and capacity huddles, and serving as a secondary escalation pathway for urgent clinical and operational concerns in addition to the Medical Director On Call (MDOC).

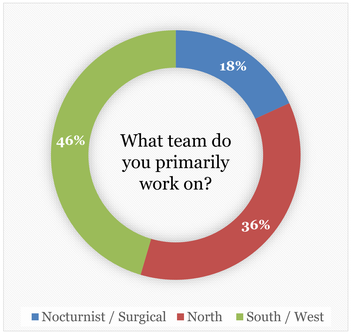
OBJECTIVES

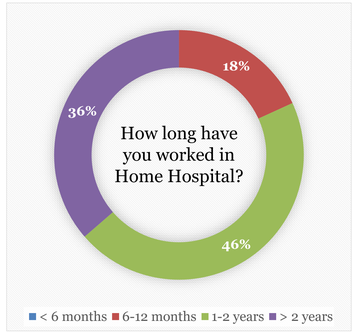
To design and implement a structured 24/7 Advanced Practice Provider On Call (APPOC) leadership model to:

1. Optimize staffing redistribution
2. Enhance APP staff engagement, job satisfaction, and retention
3. Standardize escalation pathways
4. Improve access to APP leadership support
5. Protect APP leadership sustainability during program growth

RESULTS

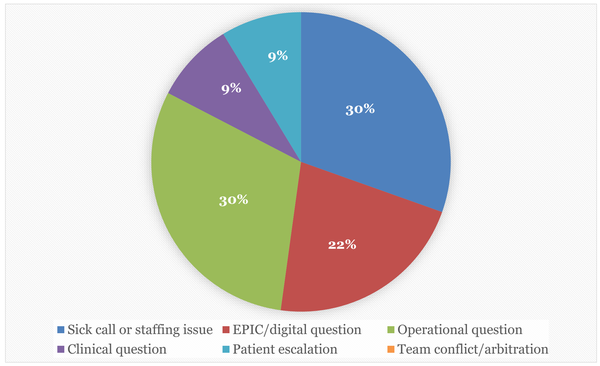
A voluntary anonymous survey was distributed to APP staff approximately one year after implementation of the APPOC leadership model with a **27.5%** participation rate.





100% of respondents had contacted the APPOC for assistance since implementation.

The most common types of issues respondents contacted the APPOC about were sick call or staffing issues and operational questions.



91% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed the APPOC leadership model improved APP leadership accessibility.

91% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed they feel comfortable escalating concerns to the APPOC.

81% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed the APPOC leadership model contributes positively to APP job satisfaction.

CONCLUSIONS

Implementation of the APPOC structure resulted in improved leadership visibility, clearer communication, enhanced staffing agility, and greater APP staff engagement and psychological safety for escalating concerns. It also provided more sustainable work/life balance for APP leadership.

Home Hospital programs are rapidly expanding, yet few have formalized leadership structures for APPs. As Home Hospital programs continue to develop and become more established, standardized policies, orientation/onboarding frameworks, and leadership infrastructure are critical to ensure workforce stability/sustainability and scalability. The APPOC leadership model may serve as a framework for other academic and community-based Home Hospital programs and could also be translated for use in traditional inpatient hospital settings.

REFERENCES

https://qualitynet.cms.gov/acute-hospital-care-at-home

KEY FEATURES

24/7 Monday-Sunday rotating schedule visible in Amion.

Ghost pager established and linked to Voalte.

Provides coverage across all teams (daytime, nocturnist, and surgical APPs).