

FHA Days Awaiting Discharge Survey

Costly Discharge Delays Impact Patients' Recovery



- Every day, patients are medically ready to leave the hospital but remain stuck in the hospital due to issues outside the hospital's control.
- Hospitals cannot discharge a patient without the services, medication, equipment and follow-up care necessary to support their recovery.
- Discharge delays are impacting patient recovery, placing additional stress on families and caregivers and creating bottlenecks in hospitals, which contributes to patients waiting in the ED for an available bed.

Key Findings

243,000

patients stuck in
the hospital

781,000

unnecessary
hospital days

\$2.5 BILLION

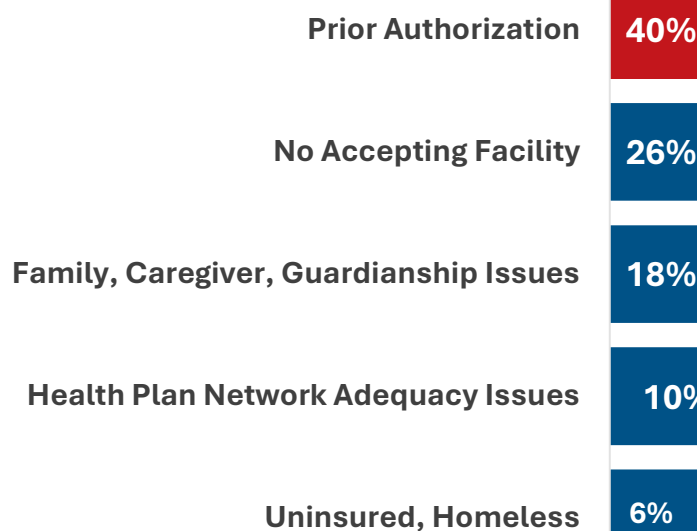
preventable
healthcare spending

158,000

ED patients waiting
over 12 hours for a bed

- The top reason for delayed discharge is **prior authorization**.
- The largest percentage of patients are waiting to go to a **skilled nursing facility**.
- Almost half of the patients delayed were covered by **Medicare Advantage**.

Drivers of Discharge Delays



SOURCE: 2025 Days Awaiting Discharge Survey, FHA, 2025; 95 hospitals, representing 38.2% of Florida hospital beds

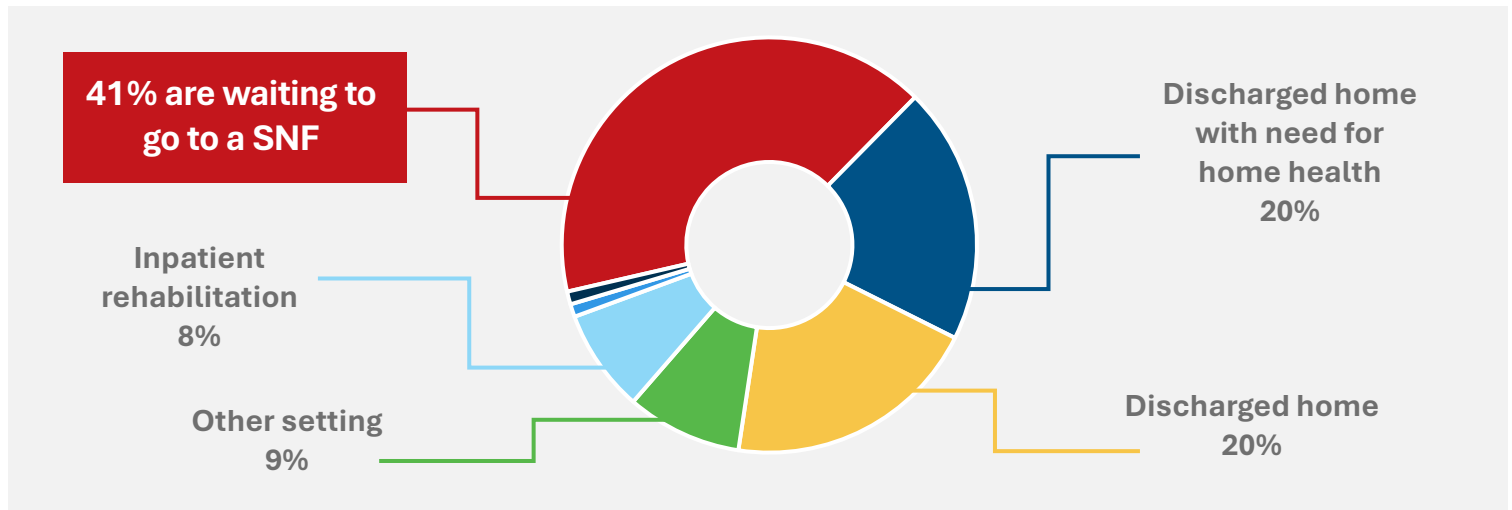
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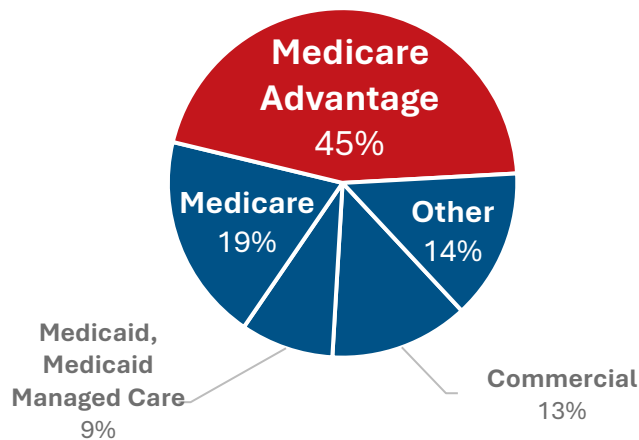
Discharge Locations

The bottleneck often begins when patients are cleared but waiting for specific post-acute settings or specialized treatments.



Patients by Payer Type

Almost half of the patients waiting are **Medicare Advantage**.



Impact on Medicare Advantage Patients

52%

were delayed while waiting for **prior authorization**.

54%

were waiting for transfer to a **skilled nursing facility**.

4,000+

waited **more than one week** for post-acute placement.

3.7 days

longer average wait after being cleared for discharge

Recommendations

Post-Acute Care Authorizations

Require authorization decisions within 24 hours once a patient is medically ready for discharge.

Align Financial Incentives

Hold health plans financially accountable for discharge delays caused by authorization or network adequacy barriers.

Increase Accountability

Monitor and publicly report discharge delays attributable to authorization and network adequacy barriers.

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