



HME Hero Profile: Dewey Roof Quantifying the Value of HME

A story of how one provider was able to demonstrate the critical role HMEs play by reducing preventable hospital readmissions of COPD patients by 40%

After years of frustration watching his margins shrink due to continued pressure on reimbursement rates, Dewey Roof, CEO of LifeHME, took matters into his own hands. He decided to target the front end of the equation—the initial order—with one of his leading hospital referral partners.

“We knew if we had cleaner orders on the front end, we wouldn’t have to dedicate so many people to manual processes, and our collection ratio would go up. We had explored every other part of our business, but now it was time to address the order process with our referral partners.”

– Dewey Roof, CEO of LifeHME

Due to the good relationship he had built with one of his primary hospital referral partners at a 400 bed hospital, Roof set out to educate the hospital’s team on new protocols that would eliminate the cumbersome and frustrating process of creating HME referral orders for their respiratory patients. Since COPD patients consistently represent one of the largest patient populations (average 23% according to the NIH) who return to the hospital within 30-days of discharge, the hospital was receptive to the idea.

AAHOMECARE
HME
HEROES

IN THE SPOTLIGHT

LifeH2H

COMPANY SNAPSHOT:

- **COMPANY:** LifeHME
- **HQ:** Columbia, South Carolina
- **LOCATIONS:** 3
- **PRIMARY PRODUCT FOCUS:** Clinical Respiratory, Respiratory, Nutrition, High-efficient Discharge Expertise
- **CEO:** Dewey Roof

The two teams worked together to educate case managers and other hospital personnel on the protocols. Initially, there was some resistance to change, but when the hospital personnel began to see how easy it was to generate a clean referral order that didn’t require a bunch of rework on their part, they were on board. The results of their work were astounding.

By addressing the entire workflow and eliminating the disjointed, manual processes previously required to get patients access to the HME products and services they needed, LifeH2H was able to:

- Reduce administrative time by 60%
- Reduce COPD preventable readmissions by 40%
- Reduce the average patient length of hospital stay by 10+%

LifeHME was also a winner. Collection ratios soared from 80% to 90%, resulting in fewer resources needing to be dedicated to collections, better cash flow, and a heightened sense of partnership with one of their key referral sources. A full white paper on this demonstration project is scheduled to be published this summer.

SERVING PROVIDERS & PATIENTS



TAKING IT UP A NOTCH

While working with their initial demonstration partner, Roof and his team continued to identify more opportunities for efficiency gains. By incorporating advanced technology into their service, LifeHME was able to automate more of the processes and reduce manual intervention. The new tech-enabled service is called LifeH2H, which integrates people, analytics, and technology into a holistic, patient-centered approach.

According to Roof, “Every segment of the care lifecycle is saying ‘Not me. Don’t cut my reimbursements,’ but it’s happening at every step along the way. Driving to the lower cost alternative hasn’t proved to be valuable for anyone – the hospital, the patient and the HME provider. And trying to steal patients

from other HME providers only compounds the problems our industry is experiencing. We wanted to be part of the solution, so we decided to go build something that could raise the water level for everyone. With this, we can all be more successful and have more sustainable businesses.”

EXPANDING THE LIFEH2H EXPERIENCE

Roof acknowledges that not every health system is willing to try something innovative and different. “HME is not their biggest problem, but Competitive Bidding has created real frustrations across most health systems. The hospitals don’t know who they can and cannot use as referral sources for HME. HME providers were saying ‘I’m not in the Medicare business anymore’ due to the dramatic reimbursement cuts. These dynamics are negatively impacting patient access and outcomes. It is time for HME providers to jump in and demonstrate their value, and that’s exactly what we are hoping to support as we roll out our solution more broadly later this year,” explained Roof.

Roof and team are also in the process of completing a second demonstration project before making the LifeH2H solution available to more HME providers.

“We hope that the results of this demonstration help spur more productive conversations for the entire HME community and demonstrate how we can play a critical role in their ability to better serve their patients, reduce the operational complexities and improve quality metrics along the way.”

AAHomecare continues to highlight HME Heroes who are working hard to educate the healthcare community on the value that HME providers bring to patient care. We salute Dewey Roof and his team at LifeH2Hsolutions.com for their efforts to elevate and quantify the HME industry value.

If you have an example of an HME provider who is doing creative things to advance our industry, tell us about it by emailing HMEHero@aahomecare.org. If you’d like to learn more about how AAHomecare is working to help regulators, lawmakers and payers better understand the value HME providers bring to the healthcare industry, visit www.aahomecare.org.