For patients with hypertension, care doesn’t stop when they leave the exam room. Getting their blood pressure under control can take weeks or months and involve medication and changes in diet and lifestyle. In the past, much of that was left to the patients to navigate on their own.

But last year, Project H.O.P.E. launched a new telemedicine program to equip patients with tools to keep a close eye on their blood pressure and keep in close contact with their care team throughout the day from the comfort of their own home.

Lydia Brown, a licensed professional nurse at the health center, leads the program. She said her team identifies patients with high blood pressure who qualify and then educate and recruit them to the program.
Once enrolled, the patients are sent home with their own blood pressure cuff, one that looks and works similar to those in any exam room, but with one major difference. Once it inflates and deflates, the device sends the results automatically to Brown and the care team at Project H.O.P.E.

“With this real time information, we can properly monitor their health in the moment,” Brown said. “That lets us make better informed decisions for their care.

If a reading comes back abnormal, Brown can act right away. She said patient education plays a significant role, perhaps the patient struggled with drinking enough water that day, or perhaps they had a particularly salty meal.

“They know I’m watching and that I care, and they appreciate that. If a number is high, I’ve had a patient say, ‘Oh no, I know Ms. Brown is going to come fuss at me,’” she said “And I am.”

But it also allows Brown to make more serious changes when needed.

“When I see elevated blood pressure readings and they are doing everything right, I go straight to the patient’s doctor or nurse and they get straight back to me,” she said. “They jump into action and adjust medications and work with the pharmacy in short order. It’s a much quicker way to help patients.”

And the patients appreciate the extra attention. For some, lowering high blood pressure has been a long fight and this extra attention makes the difference. Brown said many patients enjoy the reminders to drink water and eat healthier foods and say it shows the team at Project H.O.P.E. cares and is invested in their health.

“I’ve had patients call me tearful that I care so much and they’re so happy their numbers are getting into the healthy range,” Brown said. “They say ‘Ok my dieting is working, my exercise is working, my hydration is working. It’s such a great program.”

Right now, more than 100 patients are enrolled and using the remote blood pressure cuffs at home, but Ruth Lightson, BSN, RN, Project H.O.P.E.’s Director of Nursing, said the goal is to have more than 300 patients monitoring their blood pressure at home by the end of the year.

For more information about this program, and other medical and behavioral health services, please contact us:

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