

COUNTY OF



ALLEGHENY

RICH FITZGERALD

COUNTY EXECUTIVE

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CONTACT: Bill LaLonde
[412-292-8069](tel:412-292-8069)
William.LaLonde@AlleghenyCounty.us

Kane Introduces Telemedicine; Glen Hazel Center Will Be First RAVEN Participant

PITTSBURGH – Kane, Allegheny County’s skilled nursing and rehabilitation centers, will be introducing telemedicine at its locations in Glen Hazel, McKeesport and Ross Township. This advancement is possible through cooperation with the UPMC Technology Development Center, Center for Connected Medicine, Division of Geriatric Medicine, and Department of Biomedical Informatics.

“Bringing telemedicine to the Kane Centers will improve the speed and efficiency with which residents receive medical consultations when there is a change in their health, and it will also reduce the need to transport residents to a hospital or emergency room, which is difficult for some of them,” said County Executive Rich Fitzgerald. “Kane continues to adapt to the needs of our community by offering long-term care, short-term care, rehabilitation services, and dementia care in secure units. Telemedicine is the next logical step in ensuring quality, efficient care for residents.”

This endeavor is part of a larger initiative called RAVEN, led by UPMC Community Provider Services, which was awarded a \$19 million grant from the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS). RAVEN is an abbreviation for “Initiative to Reduce Avoidable Hospitalizations Using evidence-based Interventions for Nursing Facilities in Western Pennsylvania.” It focuses on long-term nursing facilities that are enrolled in the Medicare and Medicaid programs.

Telemedicine allows a clinician to remotely perform a history and physical examination of the eyes, ears, nose, throat, lungs, heart, abdomen, skin, extremities and nervous system. The device, known as “Telly,” will also allow family members with a telephone or computer to be involved in decisions about treatment options and/or change to the care plan, which may include transporting the resident to a hospital.

Dr. Steven Handler, Medical Director of Telemedicine and Health Information Technology for RAVEN and Medical Director for Long-Term Care Health Information Technology for UPMC Senior Communities will be introducing Telly at Kane Glen Hazel.

“Based on our feasibility study at UPMC Canterbury Place, telemedicine used by nurse practitioners to conduct consultations primarily for an acute change in condition in the nursing home is effective in the medical management of residents, avoids the need for face to face visits, and can help avoid resident transfers to the hospital/emergency department,” said Dr. Handler.

Telly does not replace the usual direct, face-to-face care that a resident receives, and it is not used for routine medical examinations. Telly is used to help a physician or nurse practitioner assess a change in a resident’s usual state of health, such as breathing, heart function, pain or skin finding.

“We recognize that a patient’s physician or nurse practitioner is sometimes not available at the skilled nursing facility to evaluate and treat the resident when there is a change in their usual state of health,” said Kane Executive Director Dennis Biondo. “The goal is to provide continuous access to high-quality health care and health-care professionals.”

The telemedicine consultations will be conducted by Certified Registered Nurse Practitioners (CRNPs) who function within a collaborative practice agreement with the attending physician, and they will conduct telemedicine consults for residents with acute changes in condition and/or palliative care needs when afterhours Telly coverage is available.

Office of the County Executive

101 Courthouse • 436 Grant Street • Pittsburgh, PA 15219

Phone [\(412\) 350-6500](tel:412-350-6500) • Fax [\(412\) 350-6512](tel:412-350-6512)