



PERSONAL HOME CARE

VNS Health's Virtual Caregiver Coaching Program Reduces Hospitalizations, Saves Costs

By MK Manoylov | August 18, 2026

VNS Health's [Center for Home Care Policy & Research](#) has developed a virtual caregiver coaching program that has now demonstrated the potential for lower rates of hospitalizations and improved quality of life.

The virtual coaching program, designed to help informal caregivers of heart failure patients manage stress and improve self-care, was also associated with a net healthcare-sector savings of \$77.45 per caregiver, according to a [study](#) published in the Journal of the American Heart Association.

The study served as a cost-effectiveness analysis, adding to earlier research on the virtual coaching program, called Virtual Caregiver Coach for You (ViCCY).

"The purpose of the study in general was to look at the efficacy of this intervention in caregivers. The emphasis for that particular approach was really the recognition that there are so many people functioning as caregivers," **Barbara Riegel**, senior research scientist at the [Center for Home Care Policy and Research](#) at VNS Health and study co-author, told *Home Health Care News*. "In this particular population of heart failure patients, we were seeing that very few of the caregivers were getting any respite support."

Founded in 1893, New York City, New York-based [VNS Health](#) is a non-profit home- and community-based healthcare organization serving more than 100,000 patients and members daily.

The study included a sample of 250 caregivers and had 165 informal caregivers of people with heart failure in the primary analysis. The caregivers in the intervention group received 10 live virtual coaching sessions over six months, while the control group received health information only.

“The needs were basically for support to help these caregivers actually take care of themselves, because we could see that they were incredibly stressed, and people are going to burn out if they’re just stressed chronically over time,” Riegel said. “We have demonstrated in some of our other work that if we can get people to take care of themselves, that then they cope better, they have lower stress and they will last a lot longer as caregivers.”

The study found that the ViCCY program cost \$1,077.26 but generated \$1,154.71 in savings for the healthcare sector.

According to the study, the ViCCY program led to fewer hospitalizations: 5% of virtual caregiving participants were hospitalized compared to 8% of control participants. The lowered hospitalization rate drove the savings, according to the study’s authors.

“I thought it was fascinating that what we saw was more healthcare resource use, not hospitalization, but visits and diagnostic tests in the intervention group than the control group,” Riegel said. “We were encouraging caregivers to take care of themselves. Something’s wrong, go get it checked out. Then we saw the benefit in fewer hospitalizations among the caregivers, and that’s why it ended up being cost-effective in improving quality of life by increasing resource use.”

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