



Advanced Therapy Solutions exists to inspire, encourage, and motivate patients to excellence in therapy. Every patient is unique to us. Therefore, each one is treated with care, support, and dignity as they strive to achieve their daily therapy goals. We pride ourselves on treating others as they want to be treated, for this is our ultimate measure of the quality of care in every respect. [Learn more>](#)

## ATS SERVICES SPOTLIGHT



### Exhale and Breathe Easier

by: Mary Smith - Director of Clinical Operations, Exhale Program, ATS

Respiratory Therapists play an integral role to support pulmonary recovery and respiratory function.

#### Did You Know?

Respiratory Therapy will follow the patient until no longer indicated, from the moment they come into the facility until the time they leave. We are able to work with Pulmonologists and other Physicians to set goals and treatment plans.

Recently we connected with **Mary Smith, Director of Clinical Operations for Exhale**, to learn more about her role and how the program supports those we serve. Keep reading below to learn more.

**Q: Please describe your role as the Director of Clinical Operations for the Exhale program.**

**A:** My primary role is to connect facilities and patients with respiratory services. We are very passionate about what we do and that is to prevent re-hospitalizations and chronic pneumonia, offer bedside respiratory assessments and provide all capabilities that hospitals provide but in a non-hospital setting.

Our goal is to treat and manage pulmonary exacerbations and short-term and long-term diseases or viruses. Our education spans from equipment, such as CPAP, BIPAP, oxygen devices, to tracheostomy care, oral hygiene and more. We work side-by-side with facility staff, provide education and support to their team and patients' health and well-being.

**Q: What should clinicians consider when addressing the needs of patients receiving cardio-pulmonary rehab or utilizing high acuity interventions?**

**A:** With the world in a pandemic for many months now, everyone is struggling with having a fully-staffed team. Clinicians need to consider bronchial hygiene to prevent infections and complete regular equipment checks on CPAPs, BIPAPs and concentrators.

**Q: How does the Exhale program help support patients?**

**A:** When patients participate in the Exhale program, we ensure to provide the services and tools that improve pulmonary and cardiovascular functions. Improvements in such areas give patients a chance to reach clinical stability and have a better quality of life, not to mention a reduced risk of re-hospitalization.

Through the Exhale program, a Respiratory Therapist is available 24/7 to provide intensive support, whether it is to answer a simple question or to do a full assessment at the bedside or virtually. Providing a person-centered approach to solving key issues, such as ensuring clinicians have the proper resources, including masks, functioning equipment is vital.

Advanced Therapy Solutions' **Exhale** program has the mission of providing a wide range of comprehensive respiratory services to patients in skilled nursing facilities, with the goal of reducing unnecessary re-hospitalizations. Our staff of qualified therapists provides comprehensive respiratory therapy to our patients.

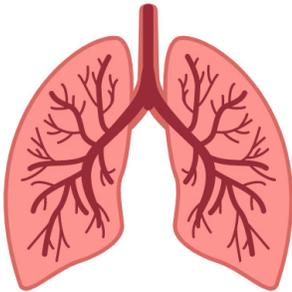
Services include in-person, virtual, or bedside assessment; on-site, virtual, or telehealth education, 24/7 virtual respiratory support; equipment set-up for BIPAP, CPAP, AVAP equipment; take-home equipment to reduce patient and family concerns upon transition of care; respirator fit testing; terminal weans, high flow oxygen training; respiratory distress training; and home sleep studies.

[Learn more about the program >>](#)



## CLINICAL SPOTLIGHT: Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease

Commonly known as COPD, Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease refers to a group of diseases that cause airflow blockage and breathing-related problems.



### Did You Know?

- COPD affects approximately 16 million Americans.
- Millions more are currently suffering from undiagnosed COPD.
- Symptoms of COPD include frequent coughing or wheezing, excess phlegm or sputum, shortness of breath, and trouble taking a deep breath.
- COPD is the third leading cause of disease-related death in the U.S.
- There is no cure for COPD, but it can be treated. ([Source](#))

### Causes and Risk Factors of COPD

Smoking is the leading cause of COPD. However, non-smokers can also be affected by this respiratory disease. It is estimated that over 80% of COPD cases are caused by cigarette smoking. Over time, exposure to irritants that damage the lungs and airways can cause COPD, which includes chronic bronchitis and emphysema. The toxins produced by cigarettes weaken the lungs' defense against infections, narrow air passages, cause swelling in air tubes and destroy air sacs. ([Source](#))

When it comes to risk factors, smoking is the number one factor for COPD. Other risk factors include:

- Exposure to air pollution
- Breathing secondhand smoke
- Working with chemicals, dust and fumes
- Alpha-1 Deficiency
- A history of childhood respiratory infection

### Informative Articles and Resources:

- [Preventing COPD Readmissions Under the Hospital Readmissions Reduction Program – CHEST](#)
- [COPD: Facts, Statistics, and You](#)
- [COPD Among Adults in Illinois – CDC](#)

# PULMONARY REHAB AND COPD

To help improve patients' well-being, **Pulmonary Rehabilitation** may be recommended by the patient's physician and clinical team.

As an essential component of the management of COPD, Pulmonary Rehabilitation helps relieve dyspnea and fatigue, improves emotional function and enhances the sense of control that individuals have over their condition. (Source)



## An Interdisciplinary Approach to Treatment

Pulmonary Rehabilitation may include a variety of supervised activities such as exercise, disease management training, and nutritional and psychological counseling. This work is strongly supported by the interdisciplinary team (IDT), who will design a care plan that fits the needs of each patient according to the health of their lungs, age and other health factors. The rehab plan may include one or more of the following activities:

- **Breathing techniques** such as pursed-lip breathing, yoga breathing, breathing with computer-aided feedback, breathing control during physical activity, and clearing mucus from the lungs.
- **Education** about lung disease and guidance for how to manage it, including learning how to recognize the signs of a flare-up early, quitting smoking, conserving energy and more.
- **Psychological counseling** to provide support with depression, anxiety, and other emotional problems developed throughout the disease, like stress management.
- **Exercise training** to strengthen the patient's back, arms, legs, and the muscles used to breathe. Training can also help build stamina and flexibility, making it easier to do everyday tasks. The IDT may recommend using medicine to open the airways or adjusting the regular oxygen therapy during physical activity.
- **Nutritional counseling** to learn what foods to eat and how to prepare meals to manage COPD. Nutritional counseling can help ensure that patients are getting the right nutrients in the proper amounts. A dietitian may also recommend a weight-loss plan or dietary supplements or medicines to help build muscle. (Source)

**At ATS, our Cardio-Pulmonary program is designed for COPD patients to help them reach and maintain high functioning pulmonary levels and clinical stability. A licensed respiratory therapist works to develop a need-based individual treatment program to ensure the highest quality of life for COPD patients. [Contact us](#) for more information.**

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## Informative Articles and Resources:

- [Pulmonary Rehabilitation – NIH](#)
- [Pulmonary Rehabilitation for Chronic /Obstructive Pulmonary Disease – Cochrane Library](#)
- [An Official American Thoracic Society/European Respiratory Society Policy Statement: Enhancing Implementation, Use, and Delivery of Pulmonary Rehabilitation – ATS Journals](#)
- [Reducing Hospital Readmissions for COPD – AARC](#)
- [Respiratory Therapists' Roles in Reducing 30-Day Readmission Rates for Patients with COPD – Walden University](#)
- [Preventing COPD Readmissions Under the Hospital Readmissions Reduction Program – CHEST](#)

## Leadership Recommendations

Following the proper steps after a COPD hospitalization is crucial to reducing a patient's risk of re-hospitalization. The first step to success includes a customized care plan that should be shared between the care team, patient/ family to ensure specific care is provided according to the needs of the patient. Consider the following:

- A person-centered approach to patient assessment and care planning should be developed by the Interdisciplinary Team (IDT) to ensure care is personalized for each individual.
- Provide team members with appropriate training and resources to support competencies regarding Respiratory Rehabilitation approaches for each patient.
- IDT should also identify achievable goals to make breathing and cardio-pulmonary recovery easier for their patients.
- Encourage patients and families to participate in their plan of care that is customized to their specific needs and goals.
- Educate patients and families about the importance of lifestyle changes and monitoring risk factors, such as smoking, to help support their path to prevention and recovery.

**At Advanced Therapy Solutions, we are focused on maximizing our patients' physical comfort and functionality. Learn more about our services [here](#).**



### Reflections from the ATS Team

“We’re all hardworking and supportive of each other which is imperative to help our patients succeed.”

### We are Grateful

In this season of gratitude and reflection, we want to thank our clients, partners and team members. It is an honor to make part of the interdisciplinary team that ensures your patients continue to strive and enjoy a better quality of life.

On behalf of our ATS family, we thank you for your partnership and support and wish you a healthy and happy Thanksgiving.



[Learn more about our services](#) | [info@ats-therapy.com](mailto:info@ats-therapy.com)

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**Advanced Therapy Solutions | 1551 Bond Street, Naperville, IL 60563**