

## Eli's Rehab Report

### Compliance: Perfect Your Practice's Medical Records With Regular Peer Reviews

**Make reviews a team activity to keep everyone on the same page.**

Therapists know they should be conducting peer reviews of patients' medical records, but everything else isn't as clear. Use this peer review primer to ensure your practice's procedures are in line with national standards.

#### What Should You Review?

Your peer reviews should include the information that came to you with the patient, including the physician order and initial plan of care certified by the physician's signature. Then move on to the evaluation information that you've collected during treatment. Subjective information pertaining to the patient diagnosis, quantifiable and objective information, the treatment plan and its parameters, the duration and frequency of visits, any goals you've established for the patient, daily progress notes, and discharge summaries are all included under this umbrella.

#### When Should You Review?

Scheduling peer reviews can be a challenge, so practices should develop a procedure that works best for them. You can use provider meetings to do your peer reviews together. This will help you get on the same page while completing your form as well as helping you clarify records' specifics such as the treatment goals and documentation needed to complete the chart.

However, many practices set a peer review goal and leave it up to the therapists to hammer out when and where the review will happen.

#### How Often Should You Review?

Each practice can set its own rules about the frequency of peer reviews. You can have a rule that each of your therapists is required to do four peer reviews each month.

**Best practice:** Peer reviews should be conducted at least quarterly. Conducting the reviews more regularly will benefit your practice but you aren't required to do so.

#### Why Should You Review?

Besides your regulatory obligations, peer reviews are a great tool for your practice and the therapists working in it. Your documentation is more thorough, complete and accurate and it supports the charges you are billing. Peer reviews empower your staff to give open and honest feedback to each other and help educate everyone on what's required and expected from their daily work.

Through peer reviews, therapists see what they're doing well, what they need to improve, and how their performance directly impacts patient care. By reviewing the charts, each therapist has the chance to visualize how patients flow from the first treatment date to the last.

**The bottom line:** The more time and energy your practice puts into peer reviews, the better your patient outcomes will be. Focus on thorough, consistent reviews to keep your practice  and your patients  on track.