

Eli's Rehab Report

Inpatient Insights: Nail Down New Ways to Handle IRF Coverage Criteria

Get crafty with CMS timeframe requirements by flagging your charts.

Still treading water from the changes that hit your inpatient rehab facility in January? Get smart solutions on tackling two key challenges.

Challenge #1: How can I keep all the new preadmission screening requirements straight AND stay on time?

☐ **Audit yourself.** "We have started chart audits to ensure that we stay within [CMS'] specified time lines," shares **Jill Bonell, MSA, OTR, CCM**, reimbursement coordinator at the Rehab Institute of Michigan in Detroit. "We have also flagged charts with reminders on when the time frames are due. We are then placing the consult and the preadmission assessment onto our chart."

☐ **Get different staff and departments on the same page.** New England and Braintree Rehabilitation Hospitals' medical and admissions staff partnered to keep their preadmission screening assessments on track, according to **Monica Baggio Tormey, BS, RHIA, CHP**, privacy officer and regional director of health information management for the two rehab hospitals. "This sounds much simpler than it is, especially on days where we have double-digit admission rates," she says.

"The collaboration of the physicians and admission staff has improved the content and timeliness of [the preadmission screening assessments], raising awareness of its importance," Tormey reports, emphasizing that now, multiple departments, including admissions and health information, are constantly monitoring the preadmission screening assessment requirement to ensure compliance.

Challenge #2: How can we educate our physicians on what they must now include in their documentation?

☐ **Review your work.** "For all of CMS's new requirements, the leadership teams at my hospitals meet biweekly to review processes and make sure we're meeting the documentation requirements," Tormey says.

☐ **Create portable reminder tools.** "We have given all the physicians pocket cards," Bonell says. The team puts the card on each unit so the physician knows what to document. The card also includes when the documentation is due. Plus, the preadmission liaisons ensure the preadmission assessments are signed and dated prior to the patient's arrival, Bonell says. "We have also been giving feedback to the consulting physicians to ensure that all of the required elements are in their consult."