

Long-Term Care Survey Alert

Self Test: How Physician-Friendly Is Your Facility?

Answer these 5 questions and find out.

Nursing facilities can go a long way toward developing productive practice relationships with physicians by making sure they do their part in giving the physician what he/she needs to be effective and efficient. To find out how you're scoring in that regard, answer these five questions:

Does the physician have to wait around to see the resident and/or get needed information when he/she **comes to see a resident with an acute status change**? "Studies show that a doctor has to see seven patients in the facility to break even (with overhead costs), so if the doctor is coming to see a couple of patients with acute changes, the staff really needs to have the patient and information available (lab work, nursing observations, radiology studies, etc.)," says **Dennis Stone, MD**, chief medical officer with **HealthEssentials Solutions Inc.** in Louisville, KY.

Do nurses have the communication/data in order before they contact the doctor? See the dehydration fax tool as an example of one format that requires nurses to get their data in a row to send the physician.

Do you provide a list of patient problems and any new developments in the progress note section so the physician can flip to that page and see what he/she needs to document on? "That's especially important for regulatory-required visits and MDS visits," says Stone.

Does the facility give the physician a private place where he or she can review the chart and document without distractions? That's not to say the attending physician shouldn't take the time to talk to the nurses involved in residents' care, but he or she can more easily concentrate on the chart in a quiet, private space, Stone says.

Does your phone and messaging system allow the doctor to get through quickly to the right person? "A study showed that half of calls doctors make to nursing homes end up either being dropped or the staff doesn't have needed information for the doctor available when the doctor calls," cautions Stone.

Source: Dennis Stone, MD