

# QUALITY OF PATIENT CARE



NOTEWORTHY  
Medical Systems

## **INTRODUCTION**

Quality of patient care is a critical factor for any physician's office or institution. There are numerous factors that are considered by a patient when determining where to receive medical care - thereby affecting revenue, overall patient satisfaction, and patient referrals. Patients view advanced technology as a sign of competence and assurance that their caregiver is knowledgeable, and is providing the best care available. Of course, excellent patient care is only as good as those providing the services. Although the care received may be exceptional, a patient's perception of the entire office visit leads to their ultimate satisfaction (or dissatisfaction) of their experience. Personalized follow-up letters, patient education and information, legible prescriptions, prompt answers to triage calls, and lab result letters received in a timely manner all contribute to providing the best possible patient care.

Quality of care is dependent on a number of factors, including the clinical staff, administrative staff, and the overall care received by a patient before, during, and after an office visit. Electronic medical records allow caregivers to focus on the patient. Which equals improved patient care and satisfaction.

## **STATEMENT OF THE ISSUE**

Quality of patient care may be compromised from a lack of efficient means of charting. Incomplete documentation, misplaced urgent phone messages, and lost charts all contribute to less than adequate patient care. A more serious problem arises with potential drug allergies and medication interactions, illegible prescriptions, and failure to notice pertinent on-going health problems in an overflowing paper chart.

Some additional major concerns facing today's healthcare industry is that of meeting various compliance guidelines. Data collection, chart review, patient confidentiality issues and performance measurements can be costly to a practice in terms of time and resources. All practices and institutions realize the time, expense, and stress involved in preparing for an audit. This is all but eliminated with the use of electronic medical records.

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## **TAKING A PROACTIVE APPROACH**

An electronic medical record allows immediate access to a patient's chart for multiple users at any given time. Medical, surgical, and social history, allergies, and recurring problems are documented once, and reviewed with a click of a button at subsequent visits. Information is updated instantaneously.

Electronic medical records have benefits that are not possible with paper charting. Integrated wellness monitoring, allergy and medication interaction checking, automatic medication and procedure suggestions based on diagnosis are just a few examples. Patients receive personalized lab result letters. Abnormal results are charted and routed directly to the physician for their review.

Clinicians can quickly and thoroughly chart at the point of patient care. Administrators will benefit from the data mining capabilities, including: reporting for drug recalls, complete, accurate charts that are available at any time for HIPAA, OIG, and JCAHO, detailed billing documentation, and reporting tools that will track diagnosis, reasons for visit, and most commonly used procedures. Billing levels typically increase due to the detailed charting. Charge capture occurs automatically based on pre-set rules for each procedure.

Electronic Medical Records offer an efficient means of documenting patient phone calls. Messages are instantaneously routed to one or more persons. Documentation from all involved parties of any advice given to the patient is located in the patient's chart for future reference.

Factors not directly related to the patient visit include the ability to query all patient charts for drug recalls, automatic letter and form generation, legible prescriptions and encounter notes, and patient and disease specific instruction and education materials. Combined, these equal better patient care.

## **LOOKING AHEAD**

The medical industry stands to benefit greatly from current technology. The options available are endless. Electronic medical records promise to revolutionize the medical industry's access to patient information, thus holding the quality of patient care to the highest standards.

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