

C.F.R.

Clinical Financial Resource, Inc.



Teaching Physician Documentation Tips

Medicare requires teaching physicians who supervise services provided by residents, interns, and fellow to document involvement in the key or critical aspects of the patient's care along with the management of the patient.

Medicare defines a resident as "an individual who participates in an approved graduate medical education (GME) program or a physician who is not in an approved GME program but who is authorized to practice only in a hospital setting."

A teaching physician must document their personal involvement of the key aspects of the patients care. "Critical or key portion means the part (or parts) of a service that the teaching physician determines is (are) a critical or key portion(s)."

Examples of acceptable documentation

- "I performed a history and physical examination of the patient and discussed his management with the resident. I reviewed the resident's note and agree with the documented findings and plan of care."
- "I was present with resident during the history and exam. I discussed the case with the resident and agree with the findings and plan as documented in the resident's note."
- "I saw and evaluated the patient. Discussed with resident and agree with resident's findings and plan as documented in the resident's note."

Examples of unacceptable documentation

- "Agree with above."
- "Rounded, reviewed, agree."
- "Discussed with resident. Agree."
- "Seen and agree."
- "Patient seen and evaluated."

Critical Care

For procedure codes determined on the basis of time, the teaching physician must be present for the period of time for which the claim is made. Do not add time spent by the resident in the absence of the teaching physician.

Procedures

In order to bill for procedures that take only a few minutes (5 minutes or less) to complete, e.g. simple sutures, and involvement relatively little decision making once the need for the operation is determined, the teaching surgeon must be present for the entire procedure.

In order to bill for surgical, high-risk, or other complex procedures, the teaching physician must be present during all critical and key portions of the procedure and be immediately available to furnish services during the entire procedure.

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Medicare Carriers Manual Part 3 – Claims Process Transmittal 1780