

## **DOCUMENTING FUNCTIONAL IMPACT**

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### ***Proper Documentation Methods Can Lead To a Practice's Success.***

Documentation is critical to the ongoing success of your practice. At any time, an insurance company can request copies of your patient documentation. If the documentation is not complete, you could have to repay money, or worse.

In plain terms, if any aspect of a patient's care or condition is not documented, then it did not happen. Everything should be documented, and all documentation must be signed by the provider. If you are using an assistant to help in the documentation process, that person should also sign or initial all records.

One important aspect of documentation that is extremely important is the functional impact of a patient's condition, and how the condition is impacting the patient's life. This is especially true for any services that require treatment authorization.

For example: Mr. Smith used to be able to walk 40 minutes per day with no pain, and now is experiencing pain at a rating of 9 out of 10 after 10 minutes. On subsequent examinations, you should return to this same life activity and document the patient's progress. In our example, Mr. Smith is now able to walk 20 minutes before experiencing pain rated at 7 out of 10. This quantifies progress. This quantified progress also demonstrates a condition which is acute as opposed to a chronic condition.

Another example: John and his wife have recently separated. Due to the stress associated with the separation, John is having difficulty sleeping, indicated that he only slept approximately 4 hours per night, and has lost more than 15 pounds in 2 months. He is missing a great deal of work due to feeling tired and being very emotional. Since he began treatment, he is now reporting a more healthy appetite and is able to exercise 3-4 days per week. He has had no absences from work, and is able to sleep about 6 hours per night.

By documenting a patient's condition, and providing a quantifiable link to the impact of the patient's condition, you can demonstrate progress and help assure that your care falls into the guidelines of being medically necessary.