

Why a Critical Access Hospital Uses External Peer Review

We recently sat down with our client, a 25-bed critical access hospital (CAH), and asked why they use external peer review and how review findings bring value to their medical staff. Here's what they had to say:

THE SITUATION

Our 25-bed CAH is Joint Commission accredited and committed to providing the highest level of quality care to our patients. We have over 25 providers (physicians and non-physician providers) who deliver a broad scope of services, including family medicine, internal medicine, emergency medicine, orthopedic surgery, general surgery, obstetrics & gynecology, anesthesiology, and radiology.

“The surgeons often collaborate on the care of their patients, and external review provides the best source of impartial review.”

OUR APPROACH

We have a wide array of services, and close working relationships among our medical staff, so we believe it is beneficial to seek external review for all our surgical specialties. We send cases for routine review for FPPE and OPPE purposes, as well as for comprehensive review in the event of complications. Routine reviews are selected for each specialty with cases being randomly selected to include a reasonable representation of the types and quantities of surgeries performed by each surgeon. Comprehensive external review can be requested by any member of our medical staff, nursing leadership, infection control, utilization review, or surgical services.

The final reports of the external reviews are shared with our Medical Staff Credentials Committee, which determines if any additional action is required, based on the findings of the reviews. The final reports, as well as the determination of the Credentials Committee, are shared with the provider involved in the case.

Occasionally, the findings of a report will be used as an educational topic, with all patient-identifying information removed in compliance with peer-review protection statutes.

The reports provided by the reviewers are peer-against being used in discovery of legal cases but are useful for our internal processes during litigation.

THE SOLUTION

The reports from Sentact, Powered by MDReview, are received in a reasonable time frame (usually 21 days or less) and are organized, clinically pertinent, and professional. Our Credentials Committee appreciates the easy-to-read format of the simpler routine reports, as well as the thoroughness of the comprehensive reports.

“Our facility finds value in the external review process because of the objectivity and impartiality it provides.”

END RESULT

The external review process assists our Medical Staff in identifying areas of clinical quality concern and provides assurances of clinical quality that meets the standards of care. It is very important to us that Sentact utilizes only board-certified, actively practicing reviewers in a wide variety of specialty areas. We also like the process they follow when we request peer review. We are able to review the CV of a proposed reviewer and make the ultimate decision about the case reviewer.

We appreciate that the cost of the review and anticipated completion date are provided before the cases are sent to the secure portal. The staff at Sentact are very responsive to questions and are always courteous, professional, and competent.

“If we didn't send cases for external review, we would often be relying on the professional opinions of providers who practice outside of the specialty area being reviewed.”

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