

Report on Medicare Compliance Volume 29, Number 19. May 18, 2020

Example of How 2021 Documentation Changes Will Affect Notes

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Differences in how time will be documented should be reflected in physician notes when new Medicare guidelines take effect Jan. 1.^[1] This example was created by Ronda Ash, president of RKash Consulting Associates. Contact her at ronda@rkashconsulting.com.

Note Samples

- The current guideline states ~ document the total length of time of the encounter, and the record should describe the counseling and/or activities to coordinate care.
- Going forward, the note should look something like this:
 - Mrs. Ispendalotoftime presents to the office today with shortness of breath and pain upon inhalation. She states that a recent airplane trip exposed her to “plane germs.”
 - ROS – shortness of breath, pain on breathing; no other chest pain or abnormal pulse, remaining ROS is neg.; Other histories remain unchanged, although a new medication was added to her daily meds for rheumatoid arthritis, reviewed (DOS, location, initials);
 - Exam shows that there are rales in the LLL, heart is RRR with no murmur or gallops;
 - Chest X-ray ordered in-house, image reviewed personally, interpretation reveals slight shadow in LLL consistent with pneumonia;
 - Plan – begin steroid and Zpak, patient had questions regarding the interactions of her medications and hygiene practices to follow when traveling.
 - Total time today – 45 min.

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