Report on Medicare Compliance Volume 33, Number 24. July 01, 2024

CCO: ‘High Reliability Organization’ Tools Help Reduce Errors, Improve Communication

By Nina Youngstrom

Patients who call the compliance department at Inspira Health in New Jersey because they think their medical records were breached are required to provide two identifiers: their name and date of birth. Having two identifiers helps ensure Inspira Health has the right patient when it investigates the potential breach, said Dee Baughman, director of corporate compliance and ethics.

Requiring two identifiers for a privacy investigation is a “red rule” adapted from the clinical staff, which uses it to prevent medical errors. The red rule is one tool of a “high reliability organization,” Baughman said at the HCCA Compliance Institute April 15. “There are often multiple patients with the same name,” she explained. “It’s important when we begin an investigation that we have accurate information because sometimes it involves other departments, and we want to identify and communicate the patient’s information.”

High reliability organizations strive for zero harm, with an emphasis on patient safety and quality of care. “There’s a strong focus on clinical areas and allowing front-line staff to have a voice to be able to report concerns without fear of retribution,” Baughman said. About a decade ago, Inspira Health worked with Press Ganey to use high reliability organization (HRO) tools to achieve its zero-harm goals, and about four years ago, they were applied to the compliance perspective, she said. “We are using the HRO tools more as a communication enhancement.”