

Implementing MDS 3.0: Use of Therapy Students

As facilities continue to change their current practices to implement the Minimum Data Set Version 3.0 (better known as MDS 3.0), one of the emerging issues is the manner in which they document and utilize therapy students. Under the new rules, in order to record the minutes as individual therapy when a therapy student is involved in the treatment of a resident, only one resident can be treated by the therapy student and the supervising therapist or assistant (for Medicare Part A and Part B). In addition, the supervising therapist or assistant cannot engage in any other activity or treatment when the resident is receiving treatment under Medicare Part B. However, for those residents whose stay is covered under Medicare Part A, the supervising therapist or assistant cannot be treating or supervising other individuals and the therapist or assistant must be able to immediately intervene or assist the student as needed while the student and resident are both within line of sight supervision. For example under Part A, the therapist or assistant could be attending to paperwork while supervising the student and resident.

Under Medicare Part A, when a therapy student is involved with the treatment, and one of the following occurs, the minutes may be coded as concurrent therapy:

- The therapy student is treating one resident and the supervising therapist or assistant is treating another resident and the therapy student and the resident the student is treating are in line of sight of the supervising therapist or assistant; or
- The therapy student is treating two residents, both of whom are in line of sight of the therapy student and the supervising therapist or assistant, and the therapist is not treating any residents and not supervising other individuals; or
- The therapy student is not treating any residents and the supervising therapist or assistant is treating two residents at the same time, regardless of payer source, both of whom are in line of sight.

The student would be precluded from treating the resident and recording the minutes as concurrent therapy under Medicare Part B.

Under Medicare Part A, when a therapy student is involved with group therapy treatment, and one of the following occurs, the minutes may be coded as group therapy:

- The therapy student is providing the group treatment and all the residents participating in the group and the therapy student are in line of sight of the supervising therapist or assistant who is not treating any residents and is not supervising other individuals (students or residents); or
- The supervising therapist/assistant is providing the group treatment and the therapy student is not providing treatment to any resident.

Under Medicare Part B, when a therapy student is involved with group therapy treatment, and one of the following occurs, the minutes may be coded as group therapy:

- The therapy student is providing group treatment and the supervising therapist or assistant is present and in the room and is not engaged in any other activity or treatment; or
- The supervising therapist or assistant is providing group treatment and the therapy student is not providing treatment to any resident.

These changes as well as other changes regarding MDS 3.0 will take effect October 1, 2010. If you have questions regarding this provision or other provisions within MDS 3.0, please contact the APTA at advocacy@apta.org or at 800.999.2782 ext. 8533.