

Electronic Documentation

Accurate and thorough documentation is the backbone of a sound approach to risk management; it provides essential patient information, historical details about the course of patient care, and a record of services provided.

Electronic health records (EHRs) have not diminished the importance of documentation, but they have fundamentally changed the process of documenting patient care, resulting in new documentation risks. To address these challenges, healthcare organizations need policies and strategies that reinforce EHR best practices. Use this checklist to review important risk management strategies for electronic documentation and identify potential areas for improvement.

	Yes	No
Does your organization have written documentation policies that include standards and guidance specific to electronic documentation?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Do documentation policies support and enforce a consistent approach to electronic documentation among healthcare providers and staff members?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Do documentation policies include information related to copying/pasting, or “cloning,” data in EHRs? Does guidance specifically outline when copying/pasting is prohibited and when it can be used with extreme care?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Are healthcare providers required to carefully review and sign off on any copied/pasted information in EHRs?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Are EHR entries periodically audited to check for errors that may have resulted from copying/pasting information?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

	Yes	No
Are providers required at each patient encounter to review EHR data fields that default to “normal” to ensure clinical data are not misrepresented?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Are providers encouraged to perform a final quality assurance review of all data entered into data fields and check boxes?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
In addition to using data entry fields and check boxes, are providers encouraged to enter patient-specific notes and comments in EHRs as appropriate?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Have documentation polices related to amending or altering records been updated to reflect EHRs? Do these policies explain how to appropriately amend a record and offer guidance for when alteration is prohibited?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Has your organization adjusted its documentation policies to account for potential issues that metadata might present, including issues related to the timing of care and amendments to records?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Do organizational and documentation policies include guidance and requirements for the use of scribes (if applicable)?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Are records periodically printed out to ensure that print versions are logical and accurately reflect patient care?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Are healthcare providers and staff members educated about: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The EHR system used at the organization, including its functionality, capabilities, and any nonstandard features or modifications? • The organization’s general and electronic documentation policies? • The risks and consequences of EHR documentation shortcuts, such as misinformed treatment decisions and fraudulent billing allegations? • The concept of metadata, how the EHR system collects metadata, and what types of data are collected? • State and federal laws or rules related to e-discovery? 	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Does EHR training occur during orientation, as part of in-service training, when policies change, and when new technology is implemented?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Resources

- [Checklist: Documentation Essentials](#) (MedPro Group)
- [Checklist: Improving Patient Identification and Matching in Electronic Health Records](#) (MedPro Group)
- [Data Insight: Claims Involving Issues Related to Electronic Health Records](#) (MedPro Group)
- [EHR Copy and Paste and Patient Safety](#) (Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality)
- [Electronic Health Records: Patient Safety and Liability Concerns](#) (MedPro Group)
- [Guide to Reducing Unintended Consequences of Electronic Health Records](#) (HealthIT.gov)
- [Patient Safety Primer: Electronic Health Records](#) (Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality)
- [Risk Tips: Using Scribes to Document Clinical Care](#) (MedPro Group)
- [Tips for Amending Electronic Health Records](#) (MedPro Group)
- [Unintended Consequences: Identifying and Mitigating Unanticipated Issues in EHR Use](#) (American Health Information Management Association)
- [Using an EHR as a Quality Improvement Tool in Your Healthcare Practice](#) (MedPro Group)

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