



Date and time for medical entries

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Q. What is the purpose of the Joint Commission standard for dating, timing and signing all medical record entries?

A. The medical record is a legal document that pieces together the continuity of care, medication administration, identity of the responsible clinician and communication among clinicians. The Joint Commission Information Management Standard (IM.6.10) states: "Every medical record entry is to be dated, timed, the author identified and authenticated." Authentication at the MGH is shown by either written or electronic signature.

Q. What are the MGH Policies and Procedures about documenting medical record entries?

A. The MGH Patient Record Policy (3.4.1.) states: "Each clinician shall enter dated and timed notes documenting their visit. All entries in the record will be authenticated by the author, which will include the author's signature and credentials (MD, RN, etc.) along with either a pager number or printed first and last name.

Q. does the MGH demonstrate its compliance with this Joint Commission standard?

A. The MGH's interdisciplinary team of clinicians performs periodic open record reviews at the point of care. The results of these reviews, along with proposed performance improvement strategies, are being disseminated throughout the hospital.

Q. Who is responsible for ensuring that the MGH is compliant with medical record documentation?

A. Every person who documents in the medical record is accountable. Additionally, staff members from Health Information Services (HIS) perform ongoing record reviews to determine areas for improvement and provide feedback to the clinical services.

Q. How will the Joint Commission review the MGH's compliance on medical record documentation?

A. The Joint Commission will review MGH's compliance through Periodic Performance Reviews. The hospital is required to perform an annual self-assessment and report the results to the Joint Commission. When the Joint Commission performs its on-site survey, they will assess compliance based upon the actual review of evidence. This site survey "traces" the patients through the organization.

Q. How will the Joint Commission's review of MGH's compliance on medical record documentation affect the typical MGH employee?

A. Staff who work on patient care units must be particularly aware of the requirements and encourage their colleagues to complete all medical record entries appropriately.

Q. Where can an employee find more information on the subject?

A. More information about the content of the medical record can be found in the Patient Records Policy located online at <http://library.partners.org/MGH1> and selecting the following links: Clinical Policy Procedure Manual > Patient Record. Additionally, the hospital's Joint Commission website, located at www.massgeneral.org/jointcommission, will help keep employees and staff apprised of preparations for the upcoming survey.



Medication Safety *(continued)*