

Should you consider switching rehab service providers?

While the need to change contract therapy providers can sometimes be obvious for long-term care operators – e.g., in the case of poor quality, unethical business practices, dysfunctional relationships – it is often necessary to undertake a more careful analysis to determine if a switch is warranted. This checklist can help you consider whether you could benefit from changing providers.

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Key Areas to Consider

Customer Service

Even if your current provider is easy to work with and responsive to your requests, there may be a significant gap in their service model that can affect your business. Among the areas to review:

- ◆ Does your therapy provider have weekend coverage and seven day/week availability?
- ◆ Do you get 24 hour turnaround on all new admission evaluations?
- ◆ Are you getting weekly diagnosis reports and progress notes from your provider?
- ◆ Are your therapists up to date on changing requirements and compliance issues?
- ◆ Are you adding facilities that make it difficult for your provider to maintain service levels, either because of geographic reach or extra staffing requirements?
- ◆ How does your therapy provider contribute to the impact of your marketing efforts?

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Communication

The quality and consistency of communication from your therapy provider can impact the resident/family experience and your facility's overall productivity. Review these questions:

- ◆ Does your provider attend Plan of Care meetings with residents, family members and staff?
- ◆ Does your provider have consistent involvement with your STNAs to ensure progress between therapy sessions?
- ◆ Is your provider's therapy management software integrated with your EHR and other systems, so your staff can access real-time therapy information?
- ◆ What kind of training and support is provided to your staff on an ongoing basis?
- ◆ Does your provider consistently measure and track satisfaction levels of your residents and family?
- ◆ Is your provider helping you comply with best practices for new MDS survey?

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Business Optimization

Therapy services are an important contributor to the business performance of a long-term care facility. It is critical for operators to make sure their provider's processes and systems deliver an optimized business environment. Be sure to review these topics:

- ◆ Is your provider actively reviewing all residents to ensure needs are met and your case mix is optimized?
- ◆ Do the therapists understand managed care residents' requirements and work with your business office to abide by those requirements?
- ◆ Are your therapists encouraged to use objective testing measures?
- ◆ Do the therapists effectively document functional measurements to support billing and ADRs?
- ◆ Does your provider generate operational data to enable analysis of key performance metrics?
- ◆ Does billing from your provider include unexpected "up-charges" or "true-ups"?

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