

Did You Have a Championship Season?

How to use this time to prepare a better cost report

Did your team have a championship season this year? Sports team typically have a season where the performance of the team can be measured in wins and losses or even a championship in their given field. The end of the season provides an opportunity to evaluate their results and plan for ways to improve their performance next year. Some teams seem to be excellent year after year. The New England Patriots, Alabama's football team, and the Golden State Warriors come to mind. What most of these great teams have in common besides extremely skilled athletes is they work harder in the off-season than other teams and improve their skills every year. For most rural health clinics your cost report season just finished with cost reports being filed by May 31st making this a great opportunity to evaluate your results and plan to do better.

Thankfully, summer in most clinics is a slower time of year. The kids are not in school, the weather is better, and the number of patients treated for illnesses tends to be at a low point during these hot summer months. This provides a perfect opportunity to look back at what could have been done better and how to become more compliant during this year. As far as the cost report is concerned here are some of the questions to ask:

- Did we file the cost report timely and avoid our Medicare payments placed on hold?
- Did we write off Medicare Bad Debts during the fiscal year obtaining reimbursement for unpaid co-pays and deductibles?
- Did we provide the appropriate logs to receive Medicare payments for Influenza and Pneumococcal shots?
- Did we maintain/ our credentials in the EIDM system and pull our P S & R report?
- Are we able to designate our cost report preparer as an authorized cost report preparer in EIDM to file a completely electronic RHC cost report in the coming year?
- Did we Benchmark our cost report using the NARHC free benchmarking service to help evaluate our performance as compared to our peers?
- Have we continued to learn and improve our knowledge about the RHC program by attending the NARHC conferences or the Technical Assistance teleconferences and webinars including the upcoming webinar on cost reporting on July 30, 2019, at 2:00 p.m. Eastern?
- Have you considered becoming a Certified Rural Health Clinic Professional (CRHCP) through the NARHC?

Not only does the summer provide the opportunity to improve our cost report game, but compliance as well. RHCs are required to show compliance with nine conditions of participation including conducting an annual program evaluation of the total operations of the RHC. This involves reviewing medical records, updating and approving policies, evaluating utilization, and performing a mock inspection. This is a great time to review the entire operation of the clinic before the busy flu and school season is upon again. Additionally, Emergency Preparedness (EP) is something that should be revisited. In November 2017 when the Emergency Preparedness regulations first became enforceable there was a great rush for RHCs to conduct two EP drills, prepare EP policies and procedures, conduct a risk assessment, implement an Emergency Plan, and compile a Communication Plan before the compliance deadline. The majority of RHCs got the message and did a great job putting this information together for the inspectors. Unfortunately, many RHCs have the idea that the job is done. Like a vast number of compliance issues in RHCs there is a mandate to review, update, and approve your Emergency Preparedness program every year. We have had several RHCs cited for non-compliance for not updating their Emergency Plan, so again this is the perfect time to update your EP program before you receive a citation requiring immediate action.

I hope I have motivated you to go out and win the Super Bowl next year. As we all know any team can win it all, why even the Eagles managed to win the Super Bowl the year before last.

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