

OFFICE POLICY AND PROCEDURE

CHECKLIST #6

THE PROPER USE OF SCRIBES

As the use of electronic health records (EHRs) has become widespread, documentation practices and workflow patterns have changed significantly and have added to a growing clinical and administrative workload. The use of this technology has increased the amount of time necessary to complete medical record documentation and order entry.

One way that physicians have chosen to address these issues is through the use of scribes. Scribes originated in the fast-paced clinical setting of the emergency department (ED) as a way to reduce the time physicians needed to spend documenting care in an electronic format. The use of scribes has expanded from these roots in the ED to numerous other clinical settings. Scribes perform EHR data entry under the direct supervision of a licensed professional, freeing the physician or other provider to spend more time directly interacting with the patient. As unlicensed members of the healthcare team, the recruitment, training and supervision of scribes is paramount in managing their use in all clinical settings.

	YES	NO
1. Our organization’s documentation policies comply with regulatory requirements. Federal, state and regulatory changes are monitored to maintain compliance with these guidelines.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2. A written job description has been developed for scribes that outlines required qualifications and competencies, including proficiency with our EHR system and medical terminology. Job responsibilities are clearly delineated.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3. Orientation is provided for scribes that includes, but is not limited to, HIPAA, privacy regulations, organizational policies, and patient rights.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4. Scribes do not perform any clinical functions or provide any direct patient care (unless they are otherwise a licensed healthcare provider such as an LPN or RN.) This includes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • act independently; • touch patients; • handle bodily fluids or specimens; • translate for a patient; • interpret any information; and • conduct other duties while acting as a scribe. 	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

THE PROPER USE OF SCRIBES (continued)	YES	NO
5. Scribes are assigned their own unique user ID/password credentials to access the EHR system. All entries to the record made by a scribe are while logged in with their own password and user ID. In the event a licensed clinical staff member functions as a scribe, they have two separate user IDs and passwords and use them accordingly.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
6. The scribe is introduced to the patient, and the patient is given the opportunity to decline having the scribe present during the examination.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
7. The primary responsibility of the scribe is to document the clinical encounter, including the history of present illness, a review of systems, the physical exam, and the assessment and plan, as presented by the provider. Scribes may also create pending orders as dictated by the provider. Providers review and complete all medical orders.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
8. All information entered into a medical record by a scribe includes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the name of the patient and the provider providing care; • the date and time; and • authentication. 	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
9. Providers review the scribe's documentation and verify the entry. An attestation statement includes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • affirmation of the provider's presence during the time the encounter was entered; • confirmation that the provider reviewed the information and verified its accuracy; and • authentication, including date, time, name and credentials. 	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
10. Regular audits/assessments of the scribe's documentation are performed and constructive feedback for performance improvement is provided.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>