

The right way to appraise staff performance



Hospitals need not wait for yearly performance reviews to give feedback and assessments to physicians and other medical staff. There are instances when giving feedback in real time is necessary so that medical professionals realise the urgency or importance of implementing the suggestions for the benefit of patients.

According to experts, feedback works best when given as soon as possible, so everyone's likely to remember what happened. Real-time and regular feedback presents an opportunity for physicians to change their behaviour sooner, which improves patient care. Such feedback can complement the yearly meetings for evaluating staff performance.

However, many hospitals focus on patient feedback from satisfaction surveys and pay significantly less attention to peer-to-peer opinions. While patient feedback is essential for providing excellent care, experts caution that not taking professional interactions into account can create blind spots for doctors. Encouraging a regular exchange of feedback between doctors, nurses, lab techs and other staff members can help prevent negative patient interactions, medical errors and other problems, the experts point out.

For example, Temple University Hospital in Philadelphia has created a system that allows providers to receive immediate feedback. Using a mobile app or web-based software program, doctors are able to rate their peers and supervisors on specific characteristics the hospital found essential to providing value-based care. These traits include medical knowledge, interpersonal and communication skills, leadership, and professionalism.

Terminating poor performers

There are instances when your practice may need to fire some doctors for their performance. While many factors may come into play when firing a doctor, having a solid procedure in place for termination can ensure all your bases are covered.

Legal publication Lexology offers several steps for healthcare executives to follow to make sure a firing goes as smoothly as possible. Here are three of the most important:

1. Make sure performance issues are documented. Aside from disruption to a hospital's operations, termination of a doctor's contract can have a significant financial impact on your practice. Hence, it's essential to have thorough documentation that fully justifies termination, including all steps taken by your hospital throughout the doctor's employment. If a doctor is being fired for a less clear-cut reason than an obvious policy violation, it's essential to review supporting documentation to make sure it's complete.
2. Review the employment contract. Go over any contracts with a fine-tooth comb. Don't just look at the termination clauses, but also the terms of the agreement and the requirements for ending it early. Many contracts will also lay out severance pay, compensation and other legal considerations that should be taken into account before the firing.
3. Figure out continuity of care. Patient care shouldn't fall by the wayside if a physician needs to be terminated. Make arrangements for patients who were seeing a fired doctor to either see another provider at your facility or receive care elsewhere, and pay attention to state requirements for the transfer of medical records.

Source: [Healthcare Business & Technology](#)

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