
Book review

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Handbook of Home Health Standards and Documentation Guidelines for Reimbursement by T. M. Marrelli, R.N., M.A. Mosby, 11830 Westline Industrial Drive, St Louis, MO 63146. 231 pages. \$19.95.

This pocket guide is designed to provide the home health care nurse with succinct documentation that clearly justifies reimbursement, and would be a welcome addition to the library of every home health nurse. Small enough for the nurse to carry on home visits, the book provides in one place a wealth of information and documentation guidelines, which the nurse can use to develop the plan of care, chart the result of the visit, and complete the Medicare 485 and 486 forms.

In today's reimbursement climate, agencies must make as strong a case for reimbursement as possible; however, the amount of nursing time required for the documenta-

tion reduces the time available for direct patient care. The value of this book would be in the time saved in documenting the care the patient needs as well as potentially broadening the scope of care to be delivered.

The book is divided into six sections. The first section, which is over one half of the book, is a collection of 44 common medical or surgical conditions. The conditions range from actual diagnoses such as acquired immunodeficiency syndrome (AIDS) and hypertension to specific care situations such as catheter care, wound care, and urinary problems. Each condition begins with a summary of why the patient might need home health services. Next is a list of needs, including equipment requirements, for the initial visit. The nurse can use this as a basic check list before the home visit.

The next part of this section is a list of potential medical or surgical diagnoses and ICD-9-CM codes. This list would save the nurse time in looking up the codes and alert the nurse to additional potential diagnoses for the patient with a specific condition such as hypertension. The list is comprehen-

sive and includes most of the diagnoses associated with the various conditions. This part is followed by a list of associated nursing diagnoses which are needed to complete the Medicare documentation forms.

The next two parts identify service skills needed for nursing and other service disciplines for the identified condition. The content is presented so that the information can be transferred to the Medicare 485 and 486 forms. The identified nursing care a patient with one of the medical or surgical conditions might need is comprehensive and can be used in developing the plan of care as well as for the Medicare forms.

Associated factors based on the diagnosis that may justify homebound status give valuable clues to use in documenting homebound status. Next, long and short term goals based on the diagnosis for all disciplines are identified. These would be useful for writing the patient record as well as for documentation on the Medicare 485 and 486 forms.

Following the goals is a list of the most common discharge plans for each of the diagnoses. The statements are clear and would help the nurse in wording this part of the documentation. The last section offers tips for reimbursement for each medical or surgical condition. The content is organized so that by scanning the one or two pages related to the presenting medical or surgical condition, the nurse can validate his or her nursing judgement and find statements that can be used in completing the Medicare forms.

The real strength of this book lies in the concise presentation of the material a nurse needs to develop the plan of care and document the need for the proposed care. The content for each condition is not exhaustive but is complete enough to serve as a guide for the practicing home health care

nurse. This book would not serve as a reference for medical or surgical conditions but rather would assist the nurse in managing the paperwork associated with home health care delivery.

The second section of the book is organized in the same way as the first section but relates specifically to hospice care. This section would be most helpful in working with any terminally ill patient. The tips for reimbursement in this section are specific and would be valuable in helping the nurse document the care needed by a terminal patient.

The third section is related to maternal-child problems. This section is more limited than the medical and surgical conditions; however, the guidelines for reimbursement for antepartum, postpartum, and newborn care are well presented. Juvenile diabetes mellitus, gestational diabetes and sickle cell anemia are the conditions also covered in this section. Congenital anomalies and use of apnea monitors are two conditions that are not identified although these are common conditions in home health care.

The fourth section of the book provides indications or guidelines for the most common durable medical equipment covered by Medicare. The documentation presented could be placed directly on the Medicare forms. This section would be most valuable to the new nurse.

The next section contains the *HCHA Medicare Home Health Agency Manual*. The inclusion of the manual in this book provides a ready reference for nurses on home visits and gives them their own copy to use when charting. One potential problem with this section is the difficulty in reading the section as it has been reduced to very small print on 37 pages.

Finally, this book would help both new and experienced nurses to accumulate a knowledge of acceptable and effective ways

to document the need for home health care. Some purists might disagree with the straightforward approach of this book in suggesting ways to document care for reimbursement. However, the nurse in home

health care must provide the documentation and a guide such as this would be a valuable resource. Accurate and complete documentation is the key to maximum reimbursement in home health care.