

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.

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 progress notes from your provider?
- Are your doctors prompted to review evaluations and recertifications every 28-30 days?
- 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" that you weren't expecting?

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