

INTEGRITY LEGAL NURSE CONSULTING PDX NEWSLETTER
Helping you understand medical issues,
giving you more time to practice law

SEPTEMBER/OCTOBER 2017

- *THE HOW & WHY OF HEALTHCARE DATA BREACHES
- *REPERCUSSIONS OF DELAYED TREATMENT
- *RISKS & SAFETY ASSOCIATED WITH INTRAVENOUS MEDICATION ADMINISTRATION
- *CONSEQUENCES & TREATMENT FOR CHILDREN SUFFERING TRAUMATIC BRAIN INJURIES
- *PROS & CONS OF REQUIRED MINIMUM NURSE-TO-PATIENT RATIOS



WENDY VOTROUBEK,
RN, BSN, MPH
Legal Nurse Consultant

**Clinically active author of three
nursing textbooks**
wendy@legalnursepdx.com
503-775-3221
legalnursepdx.com

SERVICES INCLUDE:

- * **Providing medical record
evaluation, analysis and
summaries**
- ***Screening cases for merit,**
- ***Developing chronology of
events and timelines,**
- * **Providing cost projections**
***DME attendance,**
- ***Locating and vetting expert
witnesses,**
- *Serving as TE**
- ***Record retrieval**

THE HOW & WHY OF HEALTHCARE DATA BREACHES

While financial data was originally perceived to be the most likely target of cybercrime, healthcare breaches are becoming a serious concern

- Hackers who obtain medical files gain access to Protected Health Information (PHI), which consists of a patient's name, DOB, social security number, health insurance information, driver's license, billing information, prescriptions, and medical diagnostic information, all of which can be sold on the black market.
- About 33% of healthcare employees work outside of an office at least once a week, carrying devices with patient information to many different place, increasing the risk of theft or loss.
- Approximately 45% of health data breaches are caused by lost or stolen information from laptops, tablets, or flash drives with unencrypted data.
- To decrease chances of medical data breaches, regular training for healthcare employees is critical. Safe cyber practices should be enforced, voicemail and text messaging be HIPAA compliant, caution exercised when attaching new device to the organization's network, and vulnerability assessments conducted regularly.

Our specialized legal nurse consultants are skilled at identifying root causes of negligence as well as analyzing medical records.

THE REPERCUSSIONS OF DELAYED TREATMENT

Failure to follow-up and poor communication can result in a patient's serious harm and potentially a medical malpractice suit for the physician

- Problems in communication are a factor in up to 80% of medical malpractice cases.
- Because most primary care practices are communicating with multiple labs that may or may not be electronically connected, test results can be lost, forgotten, or not passed on to the correct physician.
- If documentation is inadequate or incomplete, an effective test result tracking system isn't implemented at the hospital or clinic, or the growth in diagnostic test volume keeps the referring clinician from being notified, delay in treatment can occur.
- Missed or delayed diagnoses can lead to the progression of an injury or condition, making it more serious or costly to address.
- In order to address these problems, hospitals can become more diligent about making reminder calls and work especially hard with non-English speakers and patients with neurological conditions. Physicians need to document conversations they've had with patients emphasizing the tests received and their importance, and hold themselves responsible for obtaining results and correct contact information for patients.

We are experts at explaining best practices, analyzing records and tests, and detecting gaps in quality care.

TESTIMONIALS

"When we use Wendy, we get a thorough and complete report. She finds issues that I had never considered and her thorough analysis is worth every penny."

Kelly L. Andersen, Esq.

"Thank you very much for your hard work on the case thus far - what I learned with you will surely help us out at mediation."

Kristen West McCall, Esq.

"Very nice report, the report will be useful to cut and paste into my settlement demand."

Jan Kitchel, Esq.

"Thank you so much for your help. Your report was both concise and thorough. The case disposition was a direct result of your report."

Ron Cox, Esq.

"Wendy provides prompt, professional, courteous service with a ready smile that sets clients at ease. She lasers in on the medical issues that matter most to highlight them for legal review as we consider how to best represent our medical cases to the triers of fact."

Jenna Harden, Esq.

"Thank you for the hard work and detailed report."

Judy Snyder, Esq.

"Excellent report and you uncovered important areas I had not considered."

Robert A. Miller, Esq.

"Because of several large cases going on at the same time, I had to find someone to do the medical review that my legal assistant normally does. I contacted Wendy and hired her for the job. The review was in the format and style I requested. It was every bit as thorough, perhaps even more, than my legal assistant. It was exactly what I needed. I would not hesitate to use Wendy again, in fact I am."

Jim Dwyer, Esq.

"Thank you for your help with this. I needed an unbiased evaluation."

Sarah Freeman, Esq.

"Thank you for your speedy work and comprehensive spreadsheet."

Jim Nelson, Esq.

"You did an excellent job."

Michael H. Bloom, Esq.

RISKS AND SAFETY ASSOCIATED ISSUES WITH INTRAVENOUS MEDICATION ADMINISTRATION

One study found that nearly 70% of intravenous administrations had at least one clinical error, a fourth of which were considered serious errors

- Potential IV-related injuries include infection, infiltration, air embolism, blood clots, and medication errors.
- Common causes of IV-related injuries include poor needle placement, improper angle or positioning of the catheter, use of oversized catheter, miscommunication about dosage or medication, negligent dressing, or failing to adequately monitor the IV flow rate.
- Swelling of the skin, change in skin appearance or temperature, bruising, pain, and leaking fluid are all signs of IV negligence or improper administration.
- To prevent IV errors, safety guidelines and routine training should be established and potential warning signs known by patients.

Our nurses are capable of interpreting medical documents and records in order to assist you with clients who have suffered from potential medical negligence.

CONSEQUENCES AND TREATMENT FOR CHILDREN SUFFERING TRAUMATIC BRAIN INJURIES

Traumatic brain injuries (TBI) account for 30% of all injury deaths in the United States, and survivors can face life-long effects

- Because TBIs change the levels of brain chemicals, it usually takes about a week before these levels stabilize, some of the effects in children might not be apparent until years later when they fail to meet increased cognitive and social expectations.
- Post-traumatic headaches and/or vertigo, memory and reasoning delay, emotional instability, and decreased ability to concentrate on a task might be experienced up to a few months after the injury.
- Long-term consequences in a child with TBI can become apparent in later years; such as the development of behavioral problems and impaired cognitive abilities, memory, and attention span.
- In order to treat a TBI properly, medical attention should be sought immediately, the child should be allowed time to get better, and school and parenting support offered for child and family.

We are skilled at assessing injury reports, treatment methods, and steps taken to address serious injuries like TBIs.

PROS & CONS OF REQUIRED MINIMUM NURSE-TO-PATIENT RATIOS

One way to combat overcrowding and understaffing in hospitals is to implement required minimum nurse-to-patient ratios

Pros

- Lower nurse-to-patient ratios decrease nurse burnout, including chronic fatigue, depression, and other potential health risks
- Retention and recruitment rates drastically improve
- Patient mortality and the number of preventable mistakes decrease

Cons

- Minimum nurse-to-patient ratio laws impose steep fiscal costs on hospitals with little say in regards to staffing decisions
- Some patients might have to wait longer for treatment if their admission depends on laws that prevent staff from accepting more patients, even if there is little activity in the ward
- Minimums don't allow for emergency situations

Please feel to contact us for the newsletter's sources, as all information is thoroughly explored and researched.