Medical peer review: An essential evaluative method for improving patient experience and outcomes

Minnesota’s 142 hospitals and health systems utilize peer review to maintain a national reputation for delivering safe, high-quality patient care.

Peer review is an objective evaluation of a health care provider’s medical decisions and activities. Minnesota’s hospitals and health systems achieve and maintain the highest levels of patient care through beneficial tools such as peer review.

Peer review:
- Promotes patient safety
- Ensures quality improvement
- Lowers costs
- Reduces future medical errors
- Enhances risk management

Minnesota’s liability and confidentiality protections of peer review are critical to maintaining the integrity and value of peer review. Peer review is a forward-looking method that helps to reduce the recurrence of adverse events.

Minnesota’s protection of review organization guidelines promotes consistent and effective peer review.

- Minnesota’s peer reviews are conducted by licensed, credentialed and qualified health care providers who exercise their clinical judgement based on years of training, education and professional experience.
- Peer review often involves the critical analysis of a health care provider’s medical decisions involving a patient. The process depends on full disclosure of the facts and circumstances of an event, which, without confidentiality assurances and immunity protections, exposes the review organizations and participants to liability.
- Protections of review organizations, their participants and proceeding documents, records, data and transcripts promotes active participation and ensures an effective review process.
- Failure to provide protections jeopardizes the effectiveness of peer review and is likely to result in hospitals and health care providers refusing to participate due to increased exposure to litigation and liability.
- Peer review does not affect an injured patient’s ability to recover costs associated with a medical incident. Patients maintain all their rights to pursue a medical malpractice or other legal claims.

Minnesota’s hospitals are leaders in reducing preventable hospital-acquired conditions and readmissions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Events Prevented</th>
<th>Savings</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>24,065</td>
<td>$211.5 million</td>
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<tr>
<td>9,843 adverse events</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>13,459 readmissions</td>
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MHA Hospital Improvement Innovation Network (HIIN) adverse events prevented and savings as of March 2017.