

TEN BASIC STANDARDS FOR SUCCESS IN NON-MEDICAL PRIVATE DUTY SERVICES

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There is no better place to be in home care than here in “private duty.” Most home care is provided by private duty organizations and this will continue to grow despite ourselves. In fact, trends are altering the long-term care continuum to be first para-professional home based services (“private duty”), next skilled and acute care (Medicare and hospital), and finally institutional care (nursing home).

Problem

Today’s private duty home care organization continues to face problems with recruitment and retention of staff, and increased competition. Likewise, unionization, independent providers, self-directed care models and the consequences of fraud present challenges to the future. All of this will have a negative impact on consumer confidence if not resolved.

The following ten elements are essential to building an organization that can deliver safe, responsible care, create a first class reputation, grow its business based on an experienced, capable staff and greatly improve consumer confidence and help organizations successfully meet the challenges ahead.

1. Ensuring the organization is legitimate, gives consumers safeguards should something go wrong, assures the community and payers that the entity is accountable, and establishes a policy basis for quality service, practices that serve diversity within the community being served and that the organization complies with applicable laws and regulations.

Strategies: Develop organizational core values; a policy basis for service delivery and organizational practices that demonstrate inclusion of the diversity within the area served and compliance with the law.

Results: Improved organizational accountability; reassures the consumer that there is recourse should something happen, increases consumer confidence; protection of the owner’s assets; and better enables the organization to serve the entire community.

2. Fiscal responsibility not only helps management make good decisions and protect ownership, but makes certain the consumer, community, and payer are dealing with a fiscally sound organization to assure continuity of service, and to provide recourse should such action be necessary.

Strategies: Develop sound accounting policies and procedures; procure necessary business and liability insurance coverage.

Results: Reassures the consumer that there is recourse should something happen; increases staff job security knowing organization is financially viable; protects the owner’s assets; enables organization to make better decisions and create a more efficient operation.

3. The organization should continuously strive to better the quality of care, deliver more effective service, and maintain positive service outcomes. By doing so the organization builds a reputation based on increased consumer confidence that will help differentiate the organization in the marketplace.

Strategies: Develop organizational policies and procedures for identifying, evaluating, and measuring service outcomes; and implementing organizational mechanisms to use outcome results to improve quality of care.

Results: Improved organizational capabilities leading to better care outcomes; and increased client satisfaction through a better understanding of service expectations.

4. Maintaining a high level of integrity in all areas of operation, the organization safeguards its business and adds to its reputation as a responsible provider.

Strategies: Develop organization core values and policies based on principles of ethical and lawful practices for organizational conduct.

Results: Enhances the organization's ability to compete effectively by building trust, consumer and employee confidence; and reassuring payers of the honesty of the organization.

5. Keeping everyone informed about the services offered by the organization, the organizations capacity to provide these services, recipients eligible for the service, and that the organization maintains truth in advertising are crucial to growing the business.

Strategies: Develop communication and advertising methods, based upon truth in advertising principles; and inform the public about the value, benefits and eligibility criteria of services offered.

Results: Increased business by developing smarter consumers and organization as a community and consumer resource.

6. Maintaining sound human resources policies and practices provides assurances that the personnel entering the home are trustworthy and competent, and that the quality of care is preserved through experienced, satisfied employees. These practices are essential to success recruitment and retention.

Strategies: Develop human resource policies based on legal requirements; adhere to all legal requirements and employment law; and ensure procedures, practices and core values are based on fairness and inclusion.

Results: Improved recruitment and retention, thereby increasing the organizations capacity to meet service demands; more satisfied employees leading to reduced turnover, and better quality of care.

7. Training assures the consumer, community, and payer that the employee entering the home is prepared and capable to perform the needed tasks and level of care. This also decreases the organizations risk from care delivery.

Strategies: Make training a core organizational value; ensure that all employees are trained for the job they do; and provide opportunity for ongoing education for all staff.

Results: Increased consumer confidence; reduced risk of injury; easier job performance; improved quality of care; and better customer service.

8. Sound policies and procedures for service delivery and documentation ensure that the service provided meets the needs of the consumer and is appropriate, that the consumer is informed and treated fairly, and that an accurate, confidential record is maintained all help to minimize the inherent risks in home care.

Strategies: Develop methods of assessing and reassess client needs and care outcomes, documenting these needs and outcomes, and the recipient's progress; ensure that the consumer is properly informed and understands their rights and responsibilities; and retain a written record of the care and services provided.

Results: Reduced organizational risk; improved accountability; and increased client satisfaction.

9. Supervision ensures the consumer, community, and payer that the service is delivered safely, that problems are resolved quickly, that employees are supported, and that service continues to meet the changing needs of the recipient to achieve positive service outcomes. Supervision is also a vital part of retention, customer service, and building your business.

Strategies: Provide adequate and regular supervision of all staff; provide oversight and assistance to the recipient so their care remains appropriate to their changing situation.

Results: Better retention of staff through a feeling of belonging; improved client satisfaction; reduced risk.

10. Understanding the risks in home care, to ensure the safety of the recipient and employee, to minimize accidents and incidents, and to improve the delivery of service are necessary to safe affordable care and cost control.

Strategies: Develop methods of identifying safety concerns and issues in the work place and care environment; make safety a work requirement; reinforce safety through training and supervision.

Results: Cost and risk reduction; increase quality of care and consumer confidence; and making the job easier.

When these ten elements are in place the organization is better able to demonstrate its ability to deliver safe, effective care, manage and protect its human asset base productively, reduce the chance of unlawful or unethical behavior, and build an organizational reputation and capability to successfully compete in an already crowded marketplace and show consumers that the organization is one that they can trust.