

Best Practices in Clinical Record Keeping: Identification

One of the most basic elements of a clinical record is full and complete identification on each page of the chart, whether it is an intake form, a member health history, examination form, daily chart or treatment notes. The provider should be identified by name, professional designation, name of clinic of origin with physical address and phone number. The member should be identified with a full name and date of birth or a unique identification number. The member, the clinic, the author and their verifying signature for each entry must be clearly indicated. This “best practice” in record keeping is endorsed by many health care organizations, regulatory agencies – such as the National Commission on Quality Assurance (NCQA) – and by state authorities.

Note: If forms are two-sided, each side should have complete identification.

Some providers complain, “Why the over-kill? I know who my members are.” True, while the chart is in your office and under your control, everything is clear. However, when copies are made for another health care provider, an insurance company or an attorney (a completely identified record with a full signature or validated electronic signature is an unassailable legal record), and your identification and the member’s identification is not on every page of the paper record, the receiver may not be able to tell for certain that that page of the record is from you or pertains to your member. Also, accidents happen, and if your records are vandalized, misplaced or fall to the floor, proper identification of each page will allow successful reassembling of the files.

Every page (front/back) should include the member name and DOB or unique identification number, and make sure that your name, professional designation, name of clinic of origin with address and phone number is printed on every page. In multiple practitioner offices, identify the practitioner who is seeing that member.

Chart

- Each entry into the chart should be identified by day, month, year, the author of the note and include a verifying signature.
- Practitioners with multiple licenses shall indicate on each member record under which license their service was rendered.