

# HEALTH CARE CLIENT ALERT



## **Risk Management and the Office based Practice**

Preparedness is the key to both risk management and mitigating damages. By identifying risks and liabilities in the healthcare setting, office protocols and procedures can be implemented to reduce exposure. Integration and execution of a compliance program can prove the due-diligence efforts of healthcare professionals. These programs need to be well documented and checked on a regular schedule. This preparedness can actually yield cost savings through risk reduction via liability and malpractice carriers. There are vendors now offering programs of compliance services that provide training, compliance and documentation and verification, as an independent third party. One key area that always needs to be addressed is the medical emergency drug kit. If a healthcare facility doesn't have a medical emergency drug kit as well as an AED, are they exposing patients to unnecessary risk? Life-Threatening Emergencies Can and Do happen in Office-Based Practices, therefore proper preparation and readiness cannot be emphasized enough. From allergic reactions to anaphylaxis, asthma to cardiac arrest, the healthcare professional and their staff needs to be prepared. Three hundred fifty thousand people die per year from sudden cardiac arrest. The only effective treatment is an automated external defibrillator (AED). The time from the onset of the event to treatment is crucial to survivability during a medical emergency. OSHA states, "treatment of a serious injury should begin within three to four minutes of the accident." EMS response times vary but studies have shown response times in urban settings can range from 11-16 minutes\*. This emphasizes the need for offices to be prepared to handle an emergency.

Medical emergency drug kits need to be kept current and documentation of this process is an integral part of any compliance program. JCAHO and a number of other compliance agencies demand monthly audits of the drugs in any emergency medical kit (up to two dozen different drugs). The physical inventory typically involves breaking the seal on the kit, then examining and recording the expiration date for each drug. It's tedious, time consuming and required (and costly about \$600 annually). In many cases monthly documentation must be produced and maintained in some form of a log or book in the event of an audit or inspection. Finally, a new program has become available to healthcare facilities called "Keep Me Current" that will reduce the arduous task of monthly drug kit inspections by your personnel. This secure, web-based program allows the facility to enter their emergency medications expiration date, one time only, and then tracks and reports within thirty days of the expiration of any medication. This allows the healthcare facility to visually check the integrity of the seal on the medical emergency drug kit (or crash cart) and then print out or elect to receive a monthly report from the secure website allowing the facility to remain compliant and continue to reduce risk.

In these days of hyper-regulation it is truly unique to find a program that yields cost savings, risk management and verification by an independent third party. Inquire now, how the "Keep Me Current" program can elevate your healthcare facility to professional standards related to in-date emergency medications.

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\* Lombardi, G; Gallagher, J; Gennis, P. Outcome of out-of-hospital cardiac arrest in New York City: The Pre-Hospital Arrest Survival Evaluation (PHASE) Study. JAMA 1994; 271:678-383

\* Becker, L.B.; Ostrander, M.P.; Barrett, J.; Kondos, G.T. Outcome of CPR in a large metropolitan area - where are the survivors? Ann Emerg Med 1991; 20:3 55-361