

Professional Practice Corner

Does my supervising physician need to be in the clinic when I see patients?

Chapter Med 8.10 Supervising physician responsibilities covers this question. Section 3 states: “The supervising physician or substitute supervising physician shall be available to the physician assistant at all time for consultation either in person or with in 15 minutes of contact by telephone or by 2-way radio or television communication.” As long as your supervising physician is available with in 15 minutes, you meet these requirements.

With Medicare, supervision requirements depend on how you bill: under your own UPIN or “Incident to” your supervision physician.

For billing under your own UPIN, WPS, the Wisconsin Medicare carrier, addresses this in PHYS-026. Section G “Physician Supervision” states: (1) “ The PAs physician supervisor is primarily responsible for the overall direction and management of the PAs professional activities. The supervisor need not be physically present with the patient, unless state law provides otherwise. However (2) if the physician supervisor is not physically present with the PA, he or she must be immediately available to the PA for consultation purposes by telephone or other effective reliable means of communication. Keep in mind that this applies ONLY if you are billing under your own UPIN number.

If you bill Medicare “Incident to”, the rules clearly state that ‘the physician must be present in the office suite and immediately available to provide assistance and direction”.

Medicaid has no on site supervision requirements. The Medicaid Physician Services Handbook – Medicine and Surgery Section, Page 9 outlines physician supervision for PAs. It states: “Physician assistants must be supervised by a physician to the extent required under state regulation and licensing, medical practice statutes, and Med 8, Wis. Admin. Code.”

Copies of Chapter Med 8, Medicare PHYS-026, and the Medicaid Physician Services Handbook relating to physician assistants are available for you. Please call or email if you would like a copy

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