Policy: **Office Facility Standards – Physical Therapy, Occupational Therapy, Speech Therapy Addendum**

Date of Implementation: **December 16, 2010**

Product: **Specialty**

The standards for a professional office facility have been established and approved by American Specialty Health – Specialty's (ASH) peer review committees. These committees are comprised of practicing clinicians who participate in ASH multidisciplinary practitioner networks. Each facility in which the practitioner intends to see members must meet the facility standards, including site appearance, office policies, emergency procedures, access to treatment/services, safety, privacy, confidentiality, medical record components and storage, and ability to meet expectations for the delivery of safe, professional, quality treatment/services and care.

The following facility criteria are **required** by ASH. Additional requirements for home or alternate facility locations are available online at:

- https://www.ashlink.com/ASH/public/Providers/CQM/PracticeResource.aspx.

The following facility and medical record standards are required of any facility in which a contracted provider intends to treat ASH members. If a facility is found to be non-compliant with any of these standards, ASH will work with the provider to come into compliance; however, those marked with an asterisk (*) are standards that can preclude a facility from being a part of the network.

Office Appearance Requirements

- The entrance and facility are handicapped accessible.
- The interior and exterior of the facility and surrounding area are clean, neat, well maintained, of professional appearance, and free from safety hazards.
- The facility location and the entrance to the facility are easy to locate, including either a visible sign noting the provider's name, clinic name, and/or specialty, or the address numbers on the building are clearly visible from the street and the appropriate entrance is easily located.
- *The waiting room/area is an appropriate size, well-lit and has adequate seating capacity based on one (1) seat per patient visit per hour for each treating practitioner within the office.
- Restrooms are available and clean.

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Required for Patient Privacy and Confidentiality

- *At least one room in the office must provide for complete physical and auditory patient privacy and confidentiality. At a minimum, this includes that the room has a door, is limited to interview/examination/treatment of one patient at a time. Confidential documents such as medical records or x-rays are secured and not accessible to anyone other than the practitioner/staff.
- *Telephone and fax lines are limited to use by the practitioners and staff only.
- Patient files (medical records, billing records, etc.) are filed in an organized manner, readily accessible to the practitioner/staff, and not accessible to the public.

Required Appointment Availability

- The average in-office waiting time is thirty (30) minutes or less from the time of the patient's appointment.
- An ASH member must be able to schedule a non-urgent appointment within seven (7) calendar days of a patient's first contact with the office.

Office Operations and Safety Procedure Requirements

- Office/clinic exits are clearly marked (e.g., exit sign over each exit door) and unobstructed by weights, fitness equipment, and other obstacles.
- There are smoke detectors or sprinklers in the office or fire alarms in the building.
- A fire extinguisher is readily available within the office space; visible; and depending on the type of fire extinguisher, either the gauge indicates it is adequately charged or the expiration date is in the future.
- There is a sink with running water within the office space for the practitioner/staff to disinfect their hands between patients.
- Treatment tables are sanitized and pillowcases/covers are changed between patients.
- There is a written evacuation plan in the form of a policy and/or a posted map showing available exit routes and staff is trained in evacuation procedures.
- There is a written policy/procedure for medical emergencies (e.g., call 911).
- There is a written policy/procedure for patient non-compliance with health care advice.
- There is a written policy/procedure for confidentiality of medical records.
- There is a written policy/procedure regarding the safety of children (12 and under) in the office.
- If whirlpool therapy is available at the facility, there is a policy/procedure for sanitizing the whirlpool between patients.
- *The therapy equipment (modalities, exercise equipment, table, weights, etc.) is safe, sanitary, and in good working order.

- If physiotherapy pads are used: re-usable sponge or carbon-based physiotherapy pads must be disinfected between each patient or if adhesive "gel" type physiotherapy pads are used, each patient must have his/her own separate set, used exclusively on that patient.
- There is approximately three (3) feet of safety space surrounding each free weight station, including next to windows and foot traffic.
- Clean gowns/towels are available for patient use, as appropriate during examinations and/or treatment.
- Drinking water is available for patients near workout areas.

Child Safety

(Children within the context of this document are defined as aged 12 and under)

- Mechanical tables (e.g., treatment tables with electrical or other moving parts) have safety/emergency stop features such as a "kill switch" or button.
- Children are supervised by an adult other than the patient when mechanical tables or similar devices are being utilized.
- Children are not left to wander unsupervised within the facility.
- Bio-hazardous sharps waste containers and small objects are removed from spaces easily reachable by a child.
- Unused electrical outlets are covered with a safety plug.
- Water dispensers that have both hot and cold features should have a safety feature.
- Wires and/or cords are not within reach of children.
- All equipment is routinely validated to ensure it is operating properly.
- Bookshelves and other large pieces of furniture are secured and protected against toppling over.
- Children are not left on a treatment table unattended.
- Warning signs are posted about the potential dangers to children of touching equipment.

Medical Record Documentation

ASH requires that a medical record file is limited to one patient and, at a minimum, adheres to the following criteria:

- If the client benefit plan requires a referral, a copy of the referral must be kept within the medical record.
- Each entry clearly identifies the practitioner providing the evaluation or procedure by either initials, unique electronic identifier, or handwritten signature (even when they are the only practitioner in the office). If an assistant provides the services, not only is the assistant identified, the supervising therapist is also identified.
- Each page in the medical record contains the patient's name and/or identification number.

- The record must include the patient name, age or date of birth, address or telephone number, and employer and marital status.
- The date for each visit is documented.
- Past medical history must be documented.
- Documentation by the practitioner must be legible to another clinician reviewing the records.
- The chief complaint(s) or a problem list must be present. Significant illnesses and medical conditions are also indicated on the problem list.
- Medications, allergies and adverse reactions are promptly noted in the record. If the patient has no known allergies, or history of adverse reactions, this is appropriately noted in the record.
- There must be documentation of history and physical examination pertinent to the chief complaint(s) and health history.
- Contraindications to care, if applicable, must be documented.
- There must be evidence of coordination of care with other health care practitioners, if applicable.
- If a consultation is requested, there is a note from the consultant in the record and documentation supporting the medical necessity of the consultation, as well as a review of the report.
- Any instructions provided to the patient related to the treatment plan must be documented.

Daily treatment notes must also include the following in a manner that is clear to another clinician:

- Description of subjective and objective findings.
- Working diagnosis or symptom description.
- Treatment rendered (location and duration).
- Treatment response and/or adverse effects.
- Plan (e.g., discharge, follow-up plan, return in one [1] week).

Medical records must either be documented in English, or translated to English prior to providing ASH or any other requesting party (clinician, insurance carrier, state board, etc.) with a copy of the medical records.

ASH may request that a practitioner send a copy of member(s) medical records at any time. When medical records are requested, the medical records will be audited against the above criteria.

Please see the *Medical Record Maintenance and Documentation Practices (CPG 110 – S)* clinical practice guideline online at

https://www.ashlink.com/ASH/public/Providers/CQM/techniqueproceduregpgs.aspx for qualitative documentation criteria. These criteria were developed by clinical peers based upon the professional standards documented in the references noted at the end of the CPG.