

HOSPITALIST AS CONSULTANT

Hospitalists may provide expert medical opinion regarding the care of hospitalized patients or may serve as consultants for patients under the care of other medical and surgical services. The hospitalist consultant may provide opinions and recommendations or actively manage the patient's hospital care. Effective and frequent communication between the hospitalist and the requesting physician ensures safe and quality care. Hospitalists should promote communication between services to improve the care of the hospitalized patient, optimize resource utilization, and enhance patient safety.

KNOWLEDGE

Hospitalists should be able to:

- Define the role of the hospitalist consultant.
- Describe the components of an effective consultation.
- Assess the urgency of the consultation and the questions posed by the requesting physician.
- List factors that may affect implementation of consultant's recommendations.

SKILLS

Hospitalists should be able to:

- Obtain a thorough and relevant history and review the medical record.
- Perform a relevant physical examination.
- Interpret indicated diagnostic studies.
- Synthesize a treatment plan based on the data obtained from the history, physical examination and diagnostic studies.
- Summarize the findings in the patient record.
- List concise but specific recommendations for management.
- Communicate recommendations to the consulting physician in an expedient and efficient manner.
- Assess the level of care required, and communicate with the requesting physician if a transition of care is advised.

ATTITUDES

Hospitalists should be able to:

- Determine the hospitalist consultant's role in collaboration with the requesting physician.
- Respond promptly to the requesting physician's need for consultation.
- Lead by example by performing consultations in a collegial, professional and non-confrontational manner.
- Inform and educate the requesting physician of potential complications and opportunities for prevention of complications.
- Provide frequent follow-up, including review of pertinent findings and laboratory data, and ensure that critical recommendations have been followed.
- Provide timely and effective communication with the requesting physician/team.
- Transmit written communication legibly and with clear contact information.
- Recognize when the hospitalist's role in the patient's care is complete, document final recommendations in the medical record, and maintain availability.
- Communicate with patient and family to convey recommendations and treatment plans.
- Recognize the importance of arranging appropriate follow-up.
- Lead, coordinate or participate in multidisciplinary initiatives to promote patient safety and optimize resource utilization.