Utilization Review: A Practical Approach / Lester Sacks, MD, PhD

Background

- Utilization review has been a mandate in the State of California since 2004
- Continuous changes occurring on the State level with requirements that impact the physician’s practice... Recently, the MTUS Guideline adjunctive to ACOEM
- Defining Evidence-Based guidelines as used in the criteria explanations
  1. Strong research based evidence / Multiple studies, High quality scientific Study
  2. Moderate research based evidence / One relevant, high Quality Study or multiple adequate studies
  3. Limited research based adequate study with patient controls
  4. Panel Interpretation not meeting research based evidence (Consensus)

Rules of Engagement

The frequent problems confronting the medical provider requesting a form of treatment are related to the “LACK OF DOCUMENTED INFORMATION”

- Always support request with rationale / history
- Always support request with Evidence Based Criteria
- The record should include diagnosis (ICD) and CPT codes
- Always identify in the request when you can be reached for discussion
- Notes MUST be legible
When is Utilization Overkill?

- The Diagnosis drives the Utilization
- Requiring and Authorization for every event is not practical either from the providers, patient or payors perspective
- Diagnosis ICD-9 codes must be interpreted based on severity…Mild, Moderate or Severe.

Using Medical Logic in the UR Process

- It is not the intent of the Guidelines to be used as an absolute in making decisions about the individual patient
- The guidelines should provide a reasonable recommendation to “GUIDE” clinicians in caring for common conditions
- Guidelines are not intended to be inflexible rules

A Physician’s Perspective

- The usual course of work related injuries for improvement is 10-14 days.
- Approval of 6 treatments in PT, OT or chiropractic care covers 3x a week or 10-14 days
- Pre- Authorized specific treatment parameters reduces lag time and provides reasonable partnership with providers judgment
- Pre-Approval of limited costing for DME products
THANK YOU!