

The Role of the Medical Director

Alpha's Glory Medical Clinic is a facility that provides limited medical services under the direction and supervision of a licensed medical practitioner in the state of Maryland. The Medical Director must have an M.D., D.O., or N.P. who is licensed to practice medicine. The license of the practitioner to practice medicine imparts the legal authority for the clinic to provide medical services. The Medical Director is the party under whom the medical services are provided and thus is legally responsible for all medical services rendered. As such, the operations of the medical clinic should be seen as an extension of his/her private practice of medicine. All patients of the clinic must also be viewed as patients of the Medical Director in the same manner as patients who are served at the Medical Director's private office. Generally, the Medical Director serves in a volunteer capacity. This person need not be an OB/GYN. However, if a clinic's Medical Director is not an OB/GYN then an OB/GYN consultant should be recruited to answer periodic questions that arise in the medical practice of the clinic. In addition, the Medical Director need not be the physician who reviews and signs the ultrasound reports. However, if the Medical Director does not undertake this then a physician who is qualified to read ultrasound must be recruited.

DIRECTION AND SUPERVISION OF MEDICAL SERVICES

Proper risk management requires that the Medical Director be responsible for the direction and supervision of the medical services that are provided. This does not mean that the Medical Director must be physically present at the clinic when such services are provided. The time the Medical Director spends at the clinic is up to his/her discretion. However, active supervision of the medical services does require personal involvement from the Medical Director regardless of his/her physical presence at the clinic. Proper and active supervision from the Medical Director over the medical services of the clinic must be given in three distinct areas of operation:

- 1) Approval and ongoing review of Policies and Procedures.
- 2) Supervision of medical staff. The key medical staff person working at the clinic is the Clinic Manager (R.N. or R.D.M.S.). Supervision of the medical staff comes primarily from the Clinic Manager who is at the clinic on a day-to-day basis. Consistent communication between the Medical Director, the Clinic Manager and the Executive Director is vital for the clinic to properly function. The Clinic Manager must keep the Medical Director abreast of all operations of the clinic that are related to medical issues and the provision of medical services. The Medical Director need not be directly involved with the other medical staff but rather should monitor their work through consistent communication with the Clinic Manager and Executive Director.

- 3) Issuance of Standing Orders. A standing order is simply a generalized order from the Medical Director that sets forth policy regarding the issuance of certain medical services and defines who is eligible to receive these services. The order would set forth the criteria to be used to determine which patients are eligible to receive the limited ultrasound and what medical staff personnel is to provide the exam. Standing orders should be placed in the P&P manual and are binding upon the clinic until further amended or revoked. Standing orders should cover the provision of ultrasound services and pregnancy verifications.