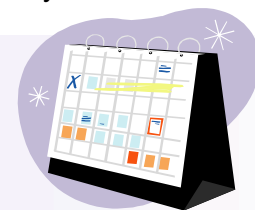


HealthCap RMS Regional Educational Seminars

Each year the HealthCap RMS team hosts a full day seminar at several locations around the country. This year's seminar: *"Is the Jury Out or.... Is the Verdict In?"* will focus on accident and incident prevention, reporting, documentation and related case studies. The schedule for this year is:

Tuesday March 18, 2008
Thursday April 24, 2008
Tuesday May 13, 2008
Thursday May 22, 2008
Wednesday, June 4, 2008
TBA
TBA
Thursday, August 21, 2008

Plymouth, Michigan
Boston, Massachusetts
Winston-Salem, North Carolina
Chicago, Illinois
Oakland, California
Omaha, Nebraska
Kansas
Claremont, California



Mark the Dates!

As a member of HealthCap, your facility is entitled to two free passes to attend a seminar in your area. Don't miss this great opportunity to attend a HealthCap RMS program! Please mark the date on your calendar or contact Lisa O'Neill at 734.996.2700 (or lisa.o'neill@chelseahome.com) for additional information.

Thank you and hope to see you there!

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HealthCap RMS

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Welcome Spring



The Quarterly Newsletter of HealthCap RMS

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In this Issue:

Rehabilitation Areas - Please Review Your Safety Checklists!

Assist Bars/Side Rails - A Safety Overview

Upcoming Seminars - Spring-Summer '08

Members Only Website - An Immensely Valuable Resource



Have You Checked Therapy Safety Lately?

Donna Long, NHA, OTR
HealthCap RMS Risk Manager

HealthCap RMS recommends that all rehabilitation/therapy gyms be included in scheduled safety rounds. Residents and staff have sustained injuries that may have been avoided if safety rounds had been performed. It is recommended that you review your safety rounds checklist and consider adding the following:

Hydroculator (hot pack machine) This equipment is usually a stainless steel device that is filled with hot water and plugs into an electrical outlet. Hot packs are removed from the hot water to render treatment and can cause injury if used inappropriately.

Written protocols need to be in place that clearly define the intent of the device as well as which staff members are approved to use the device.

If direct care staff other than Therapy is authorized to use this equipment, protocols should clearly outline the related training requirements and documentation of this training should be retained.

Annual competency testing for direct care staff providing hot pack treatments should be documented.

Therapy staff should document water temperatures Monday through Friday (at a minimum) to ensure industry and manufacturers' standards are met.

The hydroculator should be cleaned on a monthly basis and documented.

Periodically check the temperature of the outside and top of the machine using an infra red thermometer and document. If the temperature is above 140 degrees, corrective action should be documented.

Consider placing a lock on the lid to ensure only identified staff members have access. Place the machine in an area that is not accessible to residents.

Hot pack covers should be laundered on a routine basis per facility policy. These interventions will help reduce the risk of residents being burned and decrease the risk of spreading infection.

Paraffin Wax (hot wax device used for treating conditions such as arthritic/injured hands)

There should be a written protocol in place for this modality.

Ensure the temperature of the wax is monitored, documented and complies with manufacturers' specifications.

Periodic cleaning should also be performed per facility policy.

Consider turning the machine off when it is not needed to prevent possible injuries.

The heat unit should always be placed on a surface that will catch any drips when in use. The wax creates an extremely slippery surface on floors and can cause burns to fragile skin. (continued inside)



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Have You Checked Therapy Safety Lately?

(continued from front page)

Stairs Periodically check therapy steps and the hand rails for splinters and sharp edges and document corrective actions.

Parallel bars Check the ends of the bars and support extensions to ensure end caps are in place to reduce the risk of skin tears. Document any corrective actions taken.

Therapy Refrigerator Thermometers should be in both the freezer and cooling compartments and temperatures should be documented on a scheduled basis. Personal food items should not be mixed with food items used by residents. Condiments should be dated when opened and expiration dates observed to avoid food borne illness.

Stove Therapy kitchens equipped with stoves should have an external power shut off to prevent injuries related to unsupervised use. If an external power shut off is not in place, consider installing one to reduce the risk of unsupervised use of this piece of equipment. Monitor that equipment is turned off when not in use.

Therapy room door The therapy room should be locked when therapists are not there to supervise.

Ensuring that these areas are audited for compliance will assist in reducing the risk of residents being injured, contracting food borne illness and/or infection related to deficient infection control practices.

Take Advantage of Our Members Only Website!

There are many benefits to being a member of the HealthCap program including having direct access to the **HealthCap RMS "Members Only"** website. This website was developed to serve as a resource and a value added benefit to our members. The **HealthCap RMS "Members Only"** website includes access to:

- Regulatory memorandums
- Product recalls
- Policies and procedures
- Best practice guidelines
- HealthCap RMS newsletter
- Seminar schedules
- Video library catalog
- Clinical practice guidelines (CPG)
- And Much More!**



To access the **HealthCap RMS "Members Only"** link, submit your request via the website. You will receive confirmation and a password that allows you direct access to the link. If you should experience any difficulty in accessing this valuable resource, please contact Lisa O'Neill at 734.996.2700 or (lisa.o'neill@chelsearhone.com).



Assist Bars and Devices: A Safety Overview

Angie Szumlinski,
NHA, RNC, HealthCap RMS Director

Tragically, a HealthCap member facility has experienced a resident death related to an assist bar/device. The device involved is referred to under many different names such as "bed cane", "grab bar", "assist bar", etc. (however no matter what the device is called the risk remains the same). As the Administrator and/or Director of Nursing it is your responsibility to know what types of assist bar/devices are being utilized by your residents and to ensure that they meet or exceed the FDA guidelines for safety.

Many times an inappropriate assist bar/device is identified during the risk assessment process and the facility management team has no idea where it came from or when it was brought in. In fact, this is a very common scenario and when you consider that our facilities are 24/7 operations it is no wonder. The majority of family visits occur during evenings, week-ends and holidays when the management team is not available. Trust me when I tell you that these devices do not walk into your facility on their own.....family members bring them in an effort to "keep mom or dad safe".

So what do we do to prevent future incidents and/or deaths related to these devices? There is no simple answer however there are ways to assist you in addressing these concerns.

First and most importantly:

Educate the residents and families regarding the risks associated with assist bars/devices upon admission. Clearly state in the admission agreement that no assist bars/devices may be brought into the facility without prior approval of the Administrator.

Residents who have been identified as benefitting from or requesting an assist bar/device should be thoroughly assessed; both physically and cognitively to support the safe use of devices. Remember the assessment process should weigh the benefit to risk for each individual resident as it may be safer to provide a resident with physical assistance even if it limits their movement.

Although HealthCap RMS highly recommends eliminating the use of any assist bars/side rails, another option is that each facility identify one type of assist bar/device that is "approved" by the facility and meets or exceeds the FDA guidelines for safety. Assist bars/devices of any type should only be applied to the bed under the direction of the maintenance

department following the manufacturer's recommendations. Perform regular daily rounds and physically walk into each resident room to ensure that devices have not been brought in without your knowledge. Never at any time should an assist bar/device be authorized that is not permanently affixed to the frame.

PORTABLE ASSIST BARS THAT SLIDE UNDER THE MATTRESS ARE NEVER SAFE!

Attempts to "reduce" the use of assist bars may also increase risk. For example if a resident has an assist bar/device on both sides of the bed it may be more dangerous to remove one bar in a reduction attempt as the mattress may shift causing a gap between the remaining bar and the mattress. Follow the side rail safety guidelines for measurements to ensure gaps do not pose a risk to the resident.

Educate care givers to be alert to changes in resident conditions that increase the risk of injury and what to do if a "new" device is found in resident rooms.

Remember, it may not be possible to prevent every incident or injury however it is our responsibility to maintain a safe environment while respecting resident's choice. Imagine the worst case scenario and remember it can happen in your building too. Educate your facility team, residents and families and be safe!

HealthCap RMS has developed two power-point presentations that address the risks and benefits of assistive device use. The first presentation was developed for "Families and Friends" and discusses the risks and benefits associated with the use of assistive devices. This information may be shared with residents and families during the admission process or whenever additional support and education is deemed appropriate.

The second presentation discusses the risks and benefits related to the use of assistive devices as well as the regulatory implications associated with F323. This presentation was developed to be used as an in-service resource for "Direct Care Staff."

If you are interested in receiving a digital copy of these new presentation materials please feel free to contact Lisa O'Neill at lisa.o'neill@chelsearhone.com or 734.996.2700. Thank you!