The Importance of Risk-Adjustment for Measuring and Reporting Healthcare Outcomes

In the new healthcare environment, where quality and outcomes are increasingly linked to reimbursement and public reporting initiatives, you face several challenges to keeping the money flowing and your ratings high. To name a few, you must:

- Know how the reporting accounts for different factors that could affect the outcomes of patients' encounters and procedures.

- Appropriately identify the correct opportunities for improvement.

- Gain stakeholder buy-in to the changes.

- Include adequate risk-adjustment methodologies into your pay-for-performance contracts.

But understanding and communicating how data is risk-adjusted is a challenge. A PowerPoint slide of the unfathomable algorithms provided by payers and regulatory agencies can cause more confusion than clarity. You need to understand risk-adjustment and communicate about it simply, completely and competently.

This lecture will review the important elements of risk-adjustment including:

- The importance of risk-adjustment and the consequences of failing to adequately account for patients' risks.

- The different dimensions of risks and how they vary depending upon the outcomes being measured.

- Available data sources for risk-adjustment and the implications of using them.

- The characteristics, strengths and limitations of risk-adjustment development and methodology.

- Assessing the validity and efficacy of a risk-adjustment method.

- Defining the reliability of risk-adjustment methodology and factors to consider in evaluating the reliability of a risk model.

- Additional factors for comparing various provider outcomes.

Bottom line—failure to adjust data for patients' risks carries consequences much greater than the embarrassment of incorrectly reported data. This lecture will enhance attendees' understanding of the importance of risk adjustment in improving patient care, reimbursement and public reporting. It will help remove the mysteries surrounding risk adjustment.

To inquire about hearing this lecture at your organization, please send email to info@ksrowell.com.

Katherine S. Rowell, an expert in the source and use of healthcare data, teaches and advises healthcare organizations how to correctly capture and manage their data and communicate it clearly and compellingly. She has 25 years of experience in the healthcare industry, and is a member of the faculty at Brandeis, where she teaches healthcare data analysis and decision support. Her articles have been cited over 100 times by other publications and she is the recipient of the prestigious Partners in Excellence Award for Leadership and Innovation. Kathy has an MHA from the University of New Hampshire and an MS from Dartmouth Medical School in Clinical Quality and Outcomes.