

External Peer Review Services Available Through MetaStar

Jay A. Gold, MD, JD, MPH; Conni Brandt, RN, BSN, CPHQ

Health systems and hospitals are challenged to evaluate the quality of care provided to their patients by reviewing the gap between recommended and actual practice. Internal quality efforts usually include medical peer review processes. Internal peer review may assess a health care professional's overall practice patterns or a specific case review with an adverse outcome. A hospital's internal peer review policy also may include the option for external peer review.

External peer review may be indicated under the following circumstances:

- In the event of an adverse outcome, a hospital or health system wants to determine that appropriate care was provided.
- There are concerns about a practitioner's pattern of care; for example, where a practitioner has a disproportionate number of adverse outcomes.
- A hospital or health system does not have

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a same-specialty peer to provide a peer review.

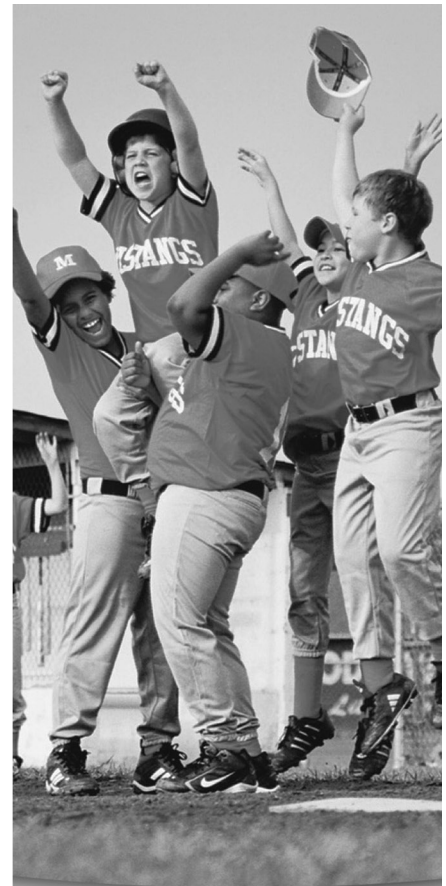
- There are concerns that the relationship of available peers with the physician under review could impair those peers' objectivity.
- A hospital or health system wishes to validate its internal peer review process and findings.

Organizations like MetaStar provide board-certified peer reviewers from a broad range of specialties to match the health care professional being reviewed. The peer reviewer attests that no conflict of interest exists with regard to the hospital, the patient, or the practitioner. The hospital provides the medical record(s) for review. The external peer reviewer applies professionally recognized standards of care and guidelines to evaluate the quality of the care provided.

In addition, a utilization review may be performed to determine whether the services provided to a patient were, or proposed services are, medically necessary and provided at the appropriate level of care.

For both quality and utilization reviews, a report is submitted to the hospital, including a case summary and a summary of the expert opinion addressing the appropriateness of the care provided.

An objective, external peer review is a cost-effective tool available to health systems and hospitals to evaluate and to ensure the quality of care provided to their patients.



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