



## MONTHLY MINUTE

### Medical Record Documentation: Avoid having to defend your memory; write it down.

[Article](#) from CRICO which addresses myths about documentation.

Dear Valued Physician:

The patient medical record is the best evidence in a medical malpractice lawsuit. It is the medical record documentation, not the physician recall of details, which can most effectively defend a physician against a malpractice claim.

Why?

- Details from several years before a trial become distant memory unless you have strong medical recordkeeping on which to rely. Effective documentation will assist you in recollecting the patient history/exam and what you were thinking at the time.
- There are instances where a case against a physician is strong clinically, but the documentation is weak. The strength of documentation can be the determining factor in deciding whether or not a claim is defensible.
- Trust in the physician is important. The attorney's job is to make the jury question the credibility of the physician. Accurate and complete documentation supports the credibility of the physician, while a poorly documented record may elicit doubt in the mind of a juror.

Good documentation is not only your most reliable form of evidence, but it contributes to patient safety.

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