



# Physician Time Study Reporting

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Who needs to complete time studies?

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How do we complete the time studies?

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# Who needs to complete time studies?

All physicians who are paid by the Hospital either by salary or contract except:

- Physicians who work only in the Federally Qualified Health Centers
- Physicians who provide only direct patient care, with no responsibility for training of interns & residents, supervision of their department, or administrative duties.

## What are the time studies used for?

The time studies are used to allocate the cost of physician compensation between direct patient care, administration & supervision of their department, and training of interns & residents.

The Hospital is paid by the Medi-Cal program under a waiver, which is based on cost. The Hospital must be able to document the cost and the services provided to be reimbursed.

The time studies are intended for Medi-Cal reimbursement and are not intended to be used as any kind of productivity measure.

## How often do the time studies need to be done?

Time studies need to be done for one week each month. Medi-Cal wants the week selected to change so that the overall hours recorded will be more representative of the physicians' duties.

The Hospital needs to select the week to be used for the time studies each month, as it is important that all the physicians time is reflective of the same period. The Hospital can also select the day of the week that it begins, and the time study would continue through seven calendar days.

If a physician is on vacation, ill, at a conference, etc., they would still complete the time study but show the hours as non-productive.

## How do we complete the time studies?

The time studies are in Excel files, to make it easy to complete on your computer and will total on its own. Once the week-long time study is complete, you can e-mail it as an attachment to Administration. For your time study to be valid, all fields must be filled in, all columns and rows need to be totaled, and it must be signed. A typed signature is acceptable.

It is best to record your time at the end of each day of a time study, reflecting on how you spent your day. You will find that you spend time in many of these categories throughout the day, and we don't want keeping track of your time to become a project in itself.

# How do we complete the time studies? (page 2)

The categories used in the time studies are:

## **DIRECT PATIENT CARE:**

- Direct patient care – this is time that would be billable as professional fees. When the physician is actually providing the patient care, even if interns & residents are observing, the time spent would be recorded here.
- If the resident is providing the care with the physician supervising, even if it is billable under the “primary care exception”, the time spent is considered supervision, not direct patient care.

# How do we complete the time studies? (page 3)

More of the categories used in the time studies are:

## **SUPERVISION:**

- Supervision of Nurses, Technicians, etc. – this is the time spent overseeing the department, usually in the capacity of Medical Director.
- Utilization Review and Committees – this is the time spent on Hospital Administrative duties.
- Quality control, Autopsy, Medical Review – these are non-billable activities, but necessary to maintain the quality of patient care.

# How do we complete the time studies? (page 4)

More of the categories used in the time studies are:

## **TEACHING INTERNS & RESIDENTS:**

- Supervision of Interns & Residents – this is the time spent when the Intern or Resident is providing the direct patient care, and the physician is observing, consulting, and overseeing the care.
- Teaching of Interns & Residents – this is the time spent in more formal education that does not include direct patient care (didactic activities).

# How do we complete the time studies? (page 5)

More of the categories used in the time studies are:

## **OTHER TEACHING ACTIVITIES:**

- Supervision of Allied Health Professionals – this is the time spent supervising Physician Assistants, Nurse Practitioners, Certified Nurse Anesthetists, etc.
- Other Administrative or Teaching – this is the time spent resolving administrative issues with interns & resident, evaluating them, etc.

# How do we complete the time studies? (page 6)

More of the categories used in the time studies are:

## **OTHER ACTIVITIES:**

- Conferences & lectures – this is time that the physician spends attending conferences & lectures.
- Vacation, Holiday, and Sick time – to be used if the physician is out for one of these reasons during the time study.
- Research – this is time that the physician spends in clinical (grant supported) research.
- Other Non-billable activities – for time spent that does not fit in any other category.

## What do we do when they are done?

When the time studies are done, please sign them and forward them to Administration. At year end, the time studies will be used to file cost reports to Medicare and Medi-Cal. At some point, the cost reports will be audited, and you may be asked to support your time studies. Information that helps support time studies includes:

- Personal calendars, especially those that show recurring meetings, clinics, rounds, etc.
- Medical Education department calendars that show lectures & events
- Committee meeting minutes that show the times and members of committees.

# FAQ

- **What are Time Studies?**

Time Studies are forms that document the amount of time our physicians are spending in teaching, administration and supervision of residents, interns, and allied health providers. Medicare uses these forms when they are auditing our documentation. When they see documentation to support only 50% of the teaching that we are doing, they adjust their reimbursement for graduate medical education proportionately.

- **Does Medicare look at these documents?**

Yes – this documentation will certainly be expected during audits from Medicare. How much money are we talking about?

The difference between doing a good job on the time studies and doing a poor job could mean well over a million dollars to our system.

- **Am I obligated to do this?**

Yes! If you are contracted with VCMC, your contract includes a percentage of time for teaching and administration. Most of the physicians in the system are contracted to provide 5-15% of their time teaching and 5-10% administrating. Your time study is required to document this service.

- **I see that the week is preprinted on the form. What if I was on vacation that week?**

No problem. There is a line towards the bottom of the form where you can designate vacation, holiday or sick hours. Please do not change the pre-selected dates.

# FAQ (page 2)

- **Why are the Time Study forms worded this way?**

The wording aligns with the verbiage of Medicare's Physicians at Teaching Hospitals rules. Briefly, the lines mean:

- DIRECT PATIENT CARE - this is time that would be billable as professional fees. When the physician is providing the patient care, even if interns & residents are observing, the time spent would be recorded here.
- SUPERVISION OF NURSES, TECHS, ETC. - this is the time spent overseeing the department, usually in the capacity of Medical Director.
- UTILIZATION REVIEW & COMMITTEES – this is the time spent on Hospital Administrative duties.
- QUALITY CONTROL, AUTOPSY, MEDICAL REVIEW – these are non-billable activities, but necessary to maintain the quality of patient care.
- SUPERVISION OF INTERNS & RESIDENTS – this is the time spent when the Intern or Resident is providing the direct patient care, and the physician is observing, consulting, and overseeing the care.
- TEACHING OF INTERNS & RESIDENTS – this is the time spent in more formal education that does not include direct patient care (didactic activities)
- SUPERVISION OF ALLIED HEALTH PROFESSIONALS – this is the time spent supervising Physician Assistants, Nurse Practitioners Certified Nurse Anesthetists, etc.
- OTHER ADMINISTRATIVE OR TEACHING – this is the time spent resolving administrative issues with interns & residents, evaluating them, etc.
- CONFERENCES & LECTURES – this is the time that the physician spends attending conferences & lectures.
- VACATION, HOLIDAY AND SICK – to be used if the physician is out for one of these reasons during the pre-determined time study week
- RESEARCH – this is time that the physician spends in clinical (grant supported) research
- OTHER NON-BILLABLE SERVICES – time spent that does not fit in any other category

- **Where to turn in - Email: [physician.invoices@venturacounty.gov](mailto:physician.invoices@venturacounty.gov)**

*Thank you for all the important work that you do for our patients! This is one way that 15 minutes of your time can have a valuable and positive effect on our services.*