Medical Liability Mutual Insurance Company

www.mlmic.com

Two Park Avenue, New York, NY 10016 | (212) 576-9800 | (800) 275-6564

New York, NY | Latham, NY | Syracuse, NY | East Meadow, NY

MLMIC Risk Management Tips

Tip #3: Prescription Medications and Patient Safety

The Risk: Patient injuries and malpractice claims can result from known risks and side effects, allergic reactions, drug interactions or errors in prescribing.

Recommendations:

1. Since there are significant risks and side effects associated with prescribed drugs, physicians must discuss this information with their patients and document these discussions in the medical record.
2. The patient's allergic history must be reviewed before a new drug is prescribed. Known allergies must be documented and flagged in a prominent, easily viewable place in the medical record.
3. Medication updates, including dosage changes and refills, and the use of any over-the-counter drugs, must be clearly documented in the medical record. A medication flow sheet can be used to monitor and track current and past medication usage, as well as allergies.
4. Any specific instructions provided to patients regarding the medications must also be written in the record.
5. There must be written confirmation that the laboratory and/or diagnostic tests necessary to monitor certain drugs for their effectiveness or side effects are ordered, as recommended by professional guidelines, and the test results viewed and necessary adjustments made.
6. The rationale for the discontinuing a medication must be documented in the medical record.