

RAC Coordinator's Role : RAC Audits Require a Coordinator to Ensure Compliance

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The national rollout of the Recovery Audit Contractor (RAC) program this year will require much of healthcare entities. In order to prepare for the program, entities should designate one person as the main point of contact for all RAC activity. The RAC coordinator helps ensure compliance with the permanent program by:

- Educating staff on the program
- Overseeing all activity in the tracking system
- Communicating with all parties involved
- Coordinating activities associated with requests, appeals, timelines, and invoicing

A sample job description for the position is shown here. It is excerpted from AHIMA's "Recovery Audit Contractors (RACs) Toolkit," available online at www.ahima.org/infocenter/practice_tools.asp.

About the Toolkit

AHIMA's Recovery Audit Contractors (RACs) Workgroup, a subgroup of the Clinical Terminology and Classification Practice Council, developed the "Recovery Audit Contractor (RAC) Toolkit" to prepare HIM professionals and their facilities for the implementation of RACs across the country. The toolkit was created to support all types of healthcare entities that participate in the Medicare program, including hospitals, physician practices, ambulatory surgical centers, and others.

The seven-part kit includes a model hierarchy of authority to assist in the internal delegation of responsibilities, with variations for large and small organizations. It also includes guidance for writing internal policies so managers can more easily implement organizational strategies that support RAC guidelines and lessen the impact of a RAC audit should it occur.

The education section provides information on how to develop a RAC education program for facility staff. A PowerPoint presentation is included as well as a list of RAC acronyms to help staff understand the terms and phrases used by this investigative arm of the federal government.

The audit process section of the toolkit includes guidance for complying and filing for a deadline extension in the event of a RAC audit, and the appeals section outlines how to appeal a decision with which your facility does not agree. A list of resources provides further guidance.

The toolkit can be accessed in its entirety at www.ahima.org/infocenter/practice_tools.asp. Other toolkits available on the site offer guidance on copy functionality in EHRs and amendments, corrections, and deletions.

RAC Coordinator: Sample Job Description

The attributes of the RAC coordinator are:

- Strong organizational skills
- Strong interpersonal skills
- Detail-oriented
- Proficient with spreadsheets and database applications
- Super-user knowledge of RAC tracking system

The RAC coordinator may or may not be a full-time role, depending on the volume of RAC requests and job functions outside RACs.

Duties/roles and responsibilities of the RAC coordinator:

- Conduct oversight of all RAC functions
- Develop internal training program
- Track status of all RAC activity using automated tracking system
- Maintain open communication with:
 - Administration/CFO
 - HIM/coding/release of information
 - Business office/financial services
 - Case management/physician advisor for clinical review
 - RACs/CMS
- Coordinate all activities associated with RAC requests, appeals, etc.
- Manage and track hand-offs between departments
- Invoice submitted records requests, if applicable
- Manage and track RAC timelines for requests and RAC responses
- Communicate with all affected external entities involved in the RAC process
- Analyze audit and RAC findings
- Follow all RAC activity to closure
- Coordinate the RAC committee with reports to corporate compliance

Other functions needed (outside of RAC coordinator):

- Clinical review
- Clerical/administrative support for RAC tracking system data entry
- Release of information process/function

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