



What's in a Soap Note- Part 3 – Assessment

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It's important to understand and properly document all aspects of a patient encounter. More and more of the insurance companies and Medicare are moving towards strongly reviewing the assessment part of the documentation in order to see how the patient is improving, which confirms they should be continuing to pay you.

The days of better/same/worse are gone folks. We can no longer get by with the basics and this includes the daily assessment. What needs to be documented in order to show medical necessity in the assessment? Let's find out.

Here is an example of a well documented daily assessment:

Diagnoses

- Lumbar Subluxation (839.20)
- Dizziness, vertigo (780.4)
- Headache (784.0)
- Neck pain (723.1)

After today's assessment Alex's overall condition is progressing slow, but steady.

Headaches: Patient's progress is noted as evidence by decreasing pain and increased ROM in the cervical region. Additionally Alex neck spasms and swelling are reduced.

Low Back Pain: Low back pain has been aggravated because of working longer hours on the line at work last week.

Your assessment must contain the information below every time you see the patient:

- Patient diagnosis codes.

- General daily assessment.
- Per complaint daily assessment.

I call these daily assessments because you need to change/update them each time you see the patient.

Remember the general and per complaint assessments shouldn't be the same for every note in the patient file. Yes, changing these each time is a pain when you just saw the patient 2 days ago, however, it is the right thing to do if you want to be as compliant as possible. You need to setup your forms or software to make these quick changes. For example you should be able to change each assessment in less than 5 seconds. For my example above you would spend less than 15 seconds changing your assessment. Let's say you see 30 patients, so it could equal 7 minutes of your time.

Now if I can help you get all your notes for that day done in just 35 minutes, I think I would make your Christmas card list. Am I right? It can be done, however, you have to remove the extra fluff and get just the facts on progress. We will put these lessons together to share how you can accomplish a great note in less time.

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