

Improving Collateral Record Acquisition for Competency to Stand Trial Evaluations

MUSC Forensic Psychiatry Fellowship

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BACKGROUND

When performing Competency to Stand Trial evaluations, it is typically useful to review collateral records from hospitals, clinics, or other treatment centers in order to complete an informed, detailed, and accurate report to submit to the court. Often, there are outstanding requests for records that go unfulfilled prior to the submission of these reports, and data on why requests are not completed in a timely manner has not been previously gathered.

AIM STATEMENT

Identify common sources that are failing to provide records by December 31, 2021.

METHODS / DATA COLLECTION

Forensic psychiatry faculty and fellows tracked medical record requests for Competency to Stand Trial evaluations via spreadsheet from October 1, 2021 to November 30, 2021.

The following data points were included:

- Date records were requested
- Request type (Fax vs email)
- Confirmed transmission of request
- Date records were received
- Report Submission Date

RESULTS

Records sent <7 days after request, on average	18 agencies
Records sent >7 days after request, on average	4 agencies
# of Agencies that never sent records	5 agencies
# of Agencies that sent records after the report submission date	9 agencies
Longest lag time for an agency to send records	17 days
Percentage of agencies which primarily used email for record requests and sent records in <7 days, on average	100%
Percentage of requests whose transmission was confirmed for agencies which had >7 day average return and/or did not send records	100%

* Data was obtained from 44 record requests between October 1, 2021 and November 30, 2021

CONCLUSIONS

- 81% of agencies returned record requests in <7 days, on average.
- Nine agencies did not return records by the report submission date. As such, those records could not be included in the opinion regarding competency.
- Agencies which accepted record requests via email had 100% return rate in <7 days, on average.
- Delay in record return or failure to send records was not secondary to request transmission failure.

LIMITATIONS

- Some local agencies from which records are frequently requested were not included in the data set due to variability in cases during the study period
- Records received after the study period were not included in the data, so the “# of agencies that never sent records’ may be artificially elevated

NEXT STEPS / INTERVENTIONS

- Indicate the urgency of record requests on the fax cover sheet (e.g., specify STAT and include due date for when they should be sent)
- Office has compiled a list of most common agencies who failed to meet records requests and are working on alternatives (e.g., emailing instead of faxing) as possible solution.
- Collect follow up data after intervention with these agencies