**Ask ALECC FAQ Newsletter - July**

 Thursday, July 13, 2023

Patient Suicide – What are the Agency Requirements?

This question came to me in recent times. It was an appropriate question coming from brand new leadership to a Hospice Agency.

For agencies accredited by an accrediting organization (TJC, ACHC or CHAP) suicide falls under the headline of a sentinel event.

For other agencies, it is critical that a patient suicide, if not a sentinel event, consider a patient safety event that requires comprehensive analysis.

Always follow your sentinel event policy and procedure and/or patient suicide policy and procedure. This includes reporting to all required offices (Quality & Patient Safety). However, with this newsletter today, I really want us to look at the steps an organization must take, especially as it relates to a comprehensive system analysis.

If a patient’s suicide should occur, the first step involves a formalized team response. There must be full disclosure to the family as well as support to family and staff. Notify organization leadership asap, and an immediate investigation should begin.

What is critical is that a comprehensive systemic analysis occurs for identifying any causal or contributing factors. Strong corrective actions identified from the causal and contributing factors addressed as vulnerabilities and hazards. Action steps resulting in sustainable improvement over time. As with any improvement project, there must be a timeline for corrective actions and a systemic approach to measuring outcomes. Suicide report in an agency’s QA report, to the governing body and board, with the results of a comprehensive analysis and corrective action steps put in place.

I write this newsletter now because clinicians are beginning to identify more guns in the home and they want to know, what do we do?

*Are we assessing properly for suicide risk?*

*Are we involving resources soon enough?*

*Are we meeting the needs of our patients and communities?*

*And I ask, are we involving our Social Workers on the team enough?*

*----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------*

*If you would like to submit a question for consideration to be featured in an ASK ALECC newsletter, please click on the link below to submit a question.*[*ASK ALECC Question Form*](https://www.alecc.com/ask-alecc)