



CASE OF THE QUARTER: CONSIDERATIONS FOR THE NEW YEAR

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The “Case of the Quarter” column is a sample case study that highlights best practices in actual scenarios encountered through [PRMS’ extensive experience in litigation and claims management](#). Specific names and references have been altered to protect clients’ interests. This discussion is for informational and education purposes only and should not be relied upon as legal advice.

FACTS:

Dr. Jones has practiced psychiatry for 22 years. He has never been sued and the Medical Board dismissed the one complaint filed against him. Not one to rest on his laurels, he finds himself thinking of ways he can improve his practice. Dr. Jones makes the following list of actions to consider and keeps it in his desk for frequent review.

1. Consider documenting treatment contemplated but not chosen and why.
2. Document informed consent discussions.
3. Consider communication/collaboration with patients’ therapists.
4. Consider requesting a copy of prior treatment records.
5. Perform and document thorough suicide assessments when indicated.
6. Consider using the Abnormal Involuntary Movement Scale (AIMS) with patients at risk for dyskinesia.
7. Stay current on laws and regulations governing the practice of telemedicine.
8. Promptly notify malpractice insurance carrier of Board complaints, subpoenas, adverse events, claims, and lawsuits.

OUTCOME:

Dr. Jones reviewed his list on the first day of each quarter. He ordered digital AIMS scales so he could easily access them for use. He noticed that he became increasingly aware of his documentation practices and felt they improved throughout the year. While documenting more thoroughly initially took extra time, Dr. Jones found he was able to do so more quickly with continued practice. He reviewed updates to telemedicine laws/regulations on a quarterly basis and alerts sent by his malpractice insurance carrier upon receipt.

TAKEAWAY:

Along with bringing the sense of satisfaction that comes with striving to improve professionally, the actions Dr. Jones considered may serve to minimize his professional liability risks.

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