Documentation with Rubber Stamps

Rubber stamps can enhance medical record keeping by providing continuity within the written note and saving time, cost, and even space. Four examples of stamps that we use are represented in Figures 1-4.

An evaluation form may be a tool for the therapist, but may not be approved for inclusion in the medical record. If included, it must be referred to, or perhaps hunted for, in a separate section of the record. A grid work stamp, as shown in Figures 1 and 2, can be contiguous with the note and can be used singularly or in multiples. The goniometric grid (Figure 1) stamped once can represent an individual finger of concern in a progress note, stamped twice might compare previous and present measurements, or stamped four times to allow for recording of each finger. The sensory discrimination grid (Figure 2) stamped twice can compare right and left hands.

The location of a surgical incision or level of sensibility is often entered on an outline drawing of the anatomical part. Either the therapist takes the added time to draw the part or includes another printed page to be referred to. A stamp, as shown in Figure 3, provides a quick and easy outline on the written record sheet.

Since a splint may have many names, a picture, as provided in Figure 4, is worth more than the name in documenting and in facilitating appropriate application of the splint. The stamp can be included in the note or even on a home program instruction sheet. One can add to the drawing by penciling in straps or indicating how to wrap dressing around the hand and the splint.

A stamp draws attention to the written occupational therapy note and frames the inclusive data as well. These four stamps were designed for specific needs. Design possibilities are probably infinite. A plate may be made from the line drawing used to order a stamp. That plate is used to cut the rubber stamp and can be saved for later duplicates in order to diminish costs. The stamps represented here averaged 15 dollars for the original.

Stamps have drawbacks in that carrying several bedside is impractical, or keeping them accessible to a large staff may be difficult. However, stamps can become a popular substitute or supplement for many of the paper forms that therapists tend to accumulate over time.

Acknowledgment
The Figure 2 design was inspired by, but modified from, the renowned work of A. Lee Dellon, M.D., on sensibility of the hand.

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