Many healthcare providers are seeking support from dedicated rehabilitation partners. Receiving support from a third-party team of rehab experts enables healthcare providers to reach the highest levels of performance in this niche and highly-regulated space. While the landscape has never been as challenging, there is also great opportunity. When identifying a rehabilitation partner, there are five key qualities that indicate long-term success.

This article outlines how rehab partners can support healthcare providers, the key qualities to look for in a partner and the top questions to ask a potential partner.

The Advantages of Support from an Acute Rehab Partner
Healthcare executives find partnerships preferable for a few key reasons, according to a recent survey by Deloitte. These reasons include:

• Improved patient experience and enhanced overall performance with fewer in-house resources. Partners are able to take on much of the responsibility for program infrastructure, allowing providers to maximize their program value at minimal investment.
• Increased patient access and improved employee retention.
• Greater scale and speed to market.
• Lower post-acute expenditures. The most effective partners can improve financial throughput by reducing several critical cost factors, including emergency room visits, stay lengths, readmissions and claim denials.

In a recent survey of healthcare executives, partnership was preferred over ownership.¹ Reasons included:

Outsourcing acute rehab management requires less capital investment and expenses than ownership.
How the Right Partnership can Empower Providers

Issues Partnerships can Resolve:

Providers are experiencing reimbursement denial rates of 80-100%.

On average, providers lose $350,000-$400,000 per year from denials.

Close to half of disengaged employees plan to job hunt within 1 year.3

RN job openings are set to reach 1.09 million.4

Partnerships can improve quality of care, while reducing operational burden.

Top 5 Qualities That Make a Great Acute Rehab Partner

While the benefits are clear, not all partners are created equal. When evaluating a potential partner, the following five qualities are key indicators of long-term success.

1. Clinical and Quality Effectiveness
   Providers should look for partners who have experience helping programs achieve top quality certifications, such as CARF and The Joint Commission. Partners must be able to demonstrate clinical effectiveness with reduced readmission rates and better patient outcomes. Achieving high standards, like CARF, also helps your program stand out from others and can increase annual patients served by 26%.2

2. Proven Track Record in Optimizing Performance
   Suitable partners have already achieved impressive results for other healthcare providers. Having a proven track record demonstrates that the partner is able to achieve measurable results and make tangible changes, which translates into higher program quality and efficiency.

3. Robust Network of Medical Directors
   Rehab programs are already being impacted by the growing talent shortage. Strong medical directors are a key component to any successful program, but hard to identify and retain. Partners must have a strong network of medical directors who are focused on provider engagement.

4. Patient Throughput Management
   An effective partner should have a well-organized system for efficiently moving patients through phases of care. Careful management ensures that patients enter rehab when they need it and stay for the appropriate amount of time. Achieving this reduces readmission rates, lowers per-patient costs and increases patient satisfaction.

5. Expert Regulatory and Compliance Team
   The current unstable regulatory environment makes it challenging to assure compliance. An ideal partner will be up to the task with a highly competent regulatory and compliance team specialized in rehab. They should be able to keep abreast of the latest changes and prepare for regulation expansions, navigating the system’s intricacies to reduce denials.

Find Your Ideal Rehab Partner

The right partner can help you boost program performance and scale. Kindred Hospital Rehabilitation Services (KHRS) serves over 150 hospital-based rehab programs, optimizing program features ranging from staffing to compliance. Their accomplishments include successful appeal of 90% of all claims they manage, as well as a 99% reduction of management vacancies.

Continued on next page
Finding the Right Partner: Key Questions to Ask

Further assess the quality of a potential partner by asking targeted questions:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Key Questions</th>
<th>Insights</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>What are your quality metrics?</td>
<td>A partner that gets results has an evaluation system that goes beyond the minimal government requirements and that assesses the most important performance benchmarks, such as changes in FIM and PEM, and discharge-to-community rates.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What do you do to decrease patient readmission risks?</td>
<td>To effectively minimize readmissions, candidates should have a clear and proven system for maximizing patient readiness for discharge.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How do you drive clinical efficiency?</td>
<td>Their answer should list practical actions that have a measurable effect on clinical efficiency.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What is your denial rate?</td>
<td>Denials add up to significant expenses for providers. Ideal partners utilize thorough compliance and a successful claim appeal process to obtain a low denial rate.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Do you utilize technology that can flag regulatory issues before they become larger problems?</td>
<td>Implementing flagging software can minimize resources devoted to resolving regulatory problems.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How do you promote patient advocacy and improve access to care?</td>
<td>Highly-trained clinical liaisons should be prominent figures in partner plans for enhancing both patient access and engagement.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How do you promote provider retention and engagement?</td>
<td>Optimizing retention is critical, as close to half of disengaged employees plan to leave their jobs within a year. Partners should place special focus on training and career development opportunities where hospital employees report lowest satisfaction rates. To combat the critical provider shortage, partners should have access to a strong network of physicians, therapists and nurses.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Do you utilize technology for improving both provider and patient engagement?</td>
<td>The latest technologies should be used to enhance engagement among physicians, therapists and the patients themselves. Additionally, tech solutions should be leveraged to enhance communication between providers and their patients.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

How KHRS Can Help

To learn more about partnership options that will enhance your program’s success, contact KHRS today.

Marty Mann
Senior Vice President, Strategic Partnerships
Kindred Hospital Rehabilitation Services
630.904.8400 • martin.mann@kindred.com
Sources


