

Audits Are Everywhere

What to Do When the Spotlight Finds You

A leader-minded toolkit for home health and hospice



Audit Readiness Snapshot (Quarterly)

Ensuring the following are in place **before** audit:

- An identified audit owner and cross-functional response team
- Clear escalation path: Clinical, operations, compliance, leadership
- Awareness of likely audit types (TPE, UPIC, SMRC, ADR, State, Accreditor)
- Visibility of high-risk patients, clinicians, and services, and patterns



Audit Readiness Snapshot (Quarterly)

Documentation should clearly tell one consistent patient story:

- Why care is appropriate and necessary **now** and in this volume
- What has changed since the last assessment
- How symptoms, goals and services align over time
- Consistency across disciplines



Early Warning Signs: Audit Triggers (Monthly)

Audits begin with **patterns**, not charts. Monitor for:

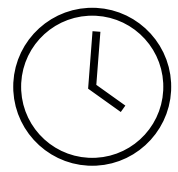
- Rapid census growth or sudden referral shifts
- High long-length-of-stay or diagnosis concentration (e.g., dementia)
- Late or inconsistent recertifications/face-to-face encounters
- Repetitive or templated documentation language
- Utilization that does not align with patient status or decline



Mock Audit Playbook (At Least Twice Per Year)

Practice how auditors think:

- Select charts based on utilization and risk patterns
- Track using CMS logic: eligibility, necessity and documentation
- Track findings by trends, not individual errors
- Route systemic issues into QAPI or focused improvement work



When an Audit Hits: The First 48 Hours

Immediate priorities:

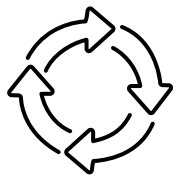
- Confirm audit scope, authority, deadlines, and submission rules
- Centralize communication; avoid side conversations or chart changes
- Validate patient lists and documentation completeness
- Prioritize accuracy and clinical clarity over speed



Leadership Audit Briefing: What Executives Need

Keep leadership focused on:

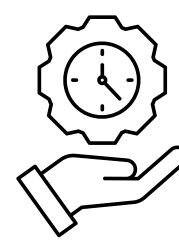
- What the auditor is reviewing and why
- Where organizational risk is concentrated
- What controls and monitoring are already in place
- Trends and mitigation actions - not raw chart detail



After the Audit: Close the Loop

Regardless of outcome:

- Trend audit findings against prior audits or denials
- Fix **workflows**, not just policies
- Educate staff using real, anonymized examples
- Feed lessons learned back into proactive monitoring



Embed a Predictive Audit Mindset

Sustainable audit readiness requires:

- Monitoring risk **before** claims are submitted
- Dashboards aligned to audit logic, not convenience
- Staff education on why documentation matters
- Early visibility into patterns so outcomes can change

