soap note headache

soap note headache documentation is a critical component in the clinical evaluation and management of patients presenting with headache complaints. This structured method allows healthcare providers to systematically record subjective and objective data, assess the patient's condition, and formulate appropriate treatment plans. In this article, the importance of a soap note for headache patients will be explored, including key components such as history taking, physical examination findings, assessment, and plan formulation. Additionally, common headache types and relevant clinical considerations will be discussed to enhance the accuracy and efficiency of documentation. Understanding how to properly document a soap note headache is essential for delivering high-quality patient care and optimizing communication among healthcare teams. The following sections will provide a comprehensive guide on how to effectively write and utilize soap notes in headache management.

- Understanding SOAP Notes in Headache Evaluation
- Subjective Data Collection for Headache
- Objective Findings in Headache SOAP Notes
- Assessment: Diagnosing Headache Types
- Planning and Management Strategies

Understanding SOAP Notes in Headache Evaluation

The SOAP note format is a universally accepted framework used by healthcare professionals to document patient encounters. It stands for Subjective, Objective, Assessment, and Plan. When applied to headache complaints, this format organizes clinical information in a clear, concise manner that facilitates diagnosis and treatment. The subjective section captures the patient's own descriptions of headache characteristics, while the objective section includes clinical findings from physical examinations and diagnostic tests. The assessment synthesizes collected data into a working diagnosis or differential diagnoses. Finally, the plan outlines the therapeutic approach, follow-up, and patient education. Utilizing a soap note headache approach ensures thoroughness and continuity of care.

Subjective Data Collection for Headache

The subjective component of a soap note headache focuses on the patient's reported experience, which is essential for identifying the nature and potential cause of the headache. Clinicians typically gather detailed information about headache onset, duration, frequency, intensity, location, quality, and associated symptoms.

Key Elements to Document

Documenting the following features helps differentiate headache types and guides further evaluation:

- Onset: When and how the headache started (e.g., sudden or gradual)
- Location: Unilateral, bilateral, frontal, occipital, or diffuse
- Quality: Descriptions such as throbbing, stabbing, dull, or pressurelike
- Intensity: Severity rated on a scale from mild to severe
- Duration: Length of each headache episode
- Frequency: How often headaches occur
- **Triggers:** Factors that provoke or worsen the headache (e.g., stress, certain foods)
- Associated Symptoms: Nausea, vomiting, aura, photophobia, phonophobia, neurological symptoms
- Relieving Factors: Actions or medications that reduce headache severity
- Past Medical History: Previous headache diagnoses, treatments, or relevant medical conditions

Patient History Considerations

Additional subjective information includes family history of headaches or migraines, medication use, and lifestyle factors such as sleep patterns, caffeine intake, and stress levels. It is important to ask about any red flag symptoms like sudden severe headache, visual changes, or neurological deficits that may indicate a more serious underlying condition.

Objective Findings in Headache SOAP Notes

The objective section involves the clinician's observations and examination results that support or rule out specific headache diagnoses. Physical and neurological examinations play a pivotal role in identifying signs that may point to secondary causes of headache.

Physical Examination Components

Key elements to assess during the physical exam include:

- Vital Signs: Blood pressure, heart rate, temperature
- General Appearance: Signs of distress or discomfort
- **Head and Neck Exam:** Palpation for tenderness, sinus tenderness, temporomandibular joint assessment
- **Neurological Examination:** Cranial nerves, motor strength, sensory testing, reflexes, coordination, gait
- Fundoscopic Exam: To check for papilledema indicating increased intracranial pressure

Diagnostic Testing

While many headaches are diagnosed clinically, some cases may require additional diagnostic studies to exclude secondary causes. Common investigations include:

- Neuroimaging (CT or MRI) for sudden onset or atypical headaches
- Laboratory tests if systemic illness is suspected
- Lumbar puncture for suspected meningitis or subarachnoid hemorrhage

Assessment: Diagnosing Headache Types

The assessment section of the soap note headache integrates subjective complaints and objective findings to establish a working diagnosis or differential diagnoses. Accurate classification is essential for effective management.

Common Headache Diagnoses

The majority of headaches fall into primary or secondary categories. Primary headaches include:

- **Migraine:** Characterized by moderate to severe pulsating pain, often unilateral, associated with nausea, photophobia, or aura
- Tension-Type Headache: Typically bilateral, pressing or tightening in quality, mild to moderate intensity
- **Cluster Headache:** Severe unilateral periorbital pain with autonomic symptoms such as lacrimation and nasal congestion

Secondary headaches arise from underlying pathology such as infections, vascular disorders, or trauma and require urgent attention.

Differential Diagnosis Considerations

During assessment, clinicians should consider red flag signs necessitating further workup. These include:

- 1. Sudden onset "thunderclap" headache
- 2. New headache in patients over 50 years old
- 3. Headache with neurological deficits
- 4. Headache associated with fever or systemic symptoms
- 5. Progressively worsening headache

Planning and Management Strategies

The plan section outlines the therapeutic approach tailored to the specific headache diagnosis. It includes pharmacological interventions, nonpharmacological therapies, patient education, and follow-up arrangements.

Treatment Options

Treatment depends on headache type and severity. Common management strategies include:

• Acute Treatment: Analgesics such as NSAIDs, acetaminophen, or triptans

for migraines

- **Preventive Therapy:** Beta-blockers, anticonvulsants, or antidepressants for frequent or severe headaches
- **Lifestyle Modifications:** Stress management, regular sleep, hydration, and dietary adjustments
- **Referral:** To neurology or headache specialists for refractory or complex cases

Monitoring and Follow-Up

Documentation should include plans for reassessment to evaluate treatment efficacy and monitor for side effects. Patient education is crucial to ensure adherence and understanding of headache triggers and management.

Frequently Asked Questions

What is a SOAP note and how is it used for documenting a headache?

A SOAP note is a structured method of documentation used by healthcare providers to record patient encounters. It stands for Subjective, Objective, Assessment, and Plan. For a headache, the SOAP note includes the patient's reported symptoms (Subjective), clinical findings (Objective), diagnosis or differential diagnosis (Assessment), and treatment or management plan (Plan).

What key subjective information should be included in a SOAP note for a patient presenting with a headache?

Key subjective information includes the headache onset, duration, intensity, location, quality (e.g., throbbing, sharp), associated symptoms (nausea, photophobia, aura), triggers, relieving factors, previous headache history, and any relevant medical or family history.

What objective findings are typically documented in a SOAP note for a headache evaluation?

Objective findings may include vital signs (blood pressure, temperature), neurological examination results (cranial nerves, motor and sensory function), physical examination findings such as neck stiffness or

tenderness, and any relevant diagnostic test results like imaging or laboratory studies.

How is the assessment section of a SOAP note structured for a headache case?

The assessment section summarizes the clinician's diagnostic impression based on the subjective and objective data. It includes the most likely diagnosis (e.g., migraine, tension headache, cluster headache), consideration of differential diagnoses, and any red flags indicating serious conditions like meningitis or intracranial hemorrhage.

What typical management plans are documented in a SOAP note for a patient with a headache?

The plan section outlines treatment strategies such as prescribing medications (analgesics, triptans), lifestyle modifications, recommending further investigations if needed, patient education on headache triggers, follow-up appointments, and when to seek emergency care.

Additional Resources

- 1. SOAP Notes for Headache Diagnosis and Management
 This book provides a comprehensive guide to writing effective SOAP notes
 specifically for patients presenting with headaches. It covers the nuances of
 subjective history taking, objective examination, assessment, and appropriate
 planning. Clinicians will find practical examples and templates to improve
 documentation and patient care.
- 2. Clinical Approaches to Headache: A SOAP Note Perspective
 Focusing on various headache disorders, this book integrates clinical
 knowledge with SOAP note documentation. It offers insight into
 differentiating types of headaches such as migraines, tension-type, and
 cluster headaches. The text also addresses treatment strategies and follow-up
 plans documented in SOAP format.
- 3. Headache Management in Primary Care: SOAP Note Essentials
 Designed for primary care providers, this resource emphasizes the importance of accurate SOAP notes in managing headache patients. It includes case studies and real-world examples to illustrate common pitfalls and best practices. The book aids clinicians in making informed decisions and ensuring continuity of care.
- 4. Effective Documentation for Headache Patients: A SOAP Note Guide
 This guide focuses on improving the quality of documentation for headache
 complaints using the SOAP framework. It highlights key questions to ask
 during history taking and details on physical examination findings. The book
 also discusses billing and coding considerations related to SOAP notes.

- 5. Neurology SOAP Notes: Headache Disorders Edition
 A specialized text for neurologists and trainees, this book delves into SOAP notes for complex headache cases. It examines pathophysiology, diagnostic criteria, and treatment plans within the SOAP note structure. Readers gain skills to document neurological evaluations succinctly and effectively.
- 6. SOAP Note Templates and Examples for Headache Clinics
 Providing a variety of ready-to-use templates, this book is a practical tool
 for headache specialists and general practitioners. It covers common headache
 presentations and includes sample notes for different patient populations.
 The resource helps streamline clinical workflow and improve record-keeping.
- 7. Headache Diagnosis and Treatment: SOAP Note Applications
 This text bridges clinical knowledge with documentation practices by
 demonstrating how to apply SOAP notes in headache diagnosis and treatment. It
 emphasizes evidence-based approaches and includes sections on pharmacologic
 and non-pharmacologic therapies. The book is suitable for students and
 practicing clinicians alike.
- 8. Mastering SOAP Notes for Headache and Migraine Care
 Targeted at healthcare students and new clinicians, this book teaches the
 fundamentals of SOAP note writing with a focus on headache and migraine
 cases. It breaks down complex clinical information into manageable parts for
 documentation. Interactive exercises and quizzes reinforce learning.
- 9. The Art of SOAP Note Documentation in Headache Medicine
 This book explores the detailed art of crafting clear and concise SOAP notes
 in the context of headache medicine. It addresses communication skills,
 clinical reasoning, and legal aspects of documentation. The text encourages
 reflective practice to enhance patient outcomes and professional development.

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Soap Note Headache: A Comprehensive Guide for Healthcare Professionals

Ebook Title: Navigating the Soap Note: A Practical Guide to Efficient and Effective Documentation

Outline:

Introduction: The Importance of Accurate and Comprehensive SOAP Notes in Healthcare Chapter 1: Understanding the SOAP Note Format: Subjective, Objective, Assessment, Plan. Detailed explanation of each section.

Chapter 2: Common Challenges in SOAP Note Documentation: Time constraints, ambiguity, legal considerations, and electronic health record (EHR) systems.

Chapter 3: SOAP Note Best Practices for Headache Documentation: Specific examples and templates for various headache types (migraine, tension, cluster). ICD-10 coding considerations.

Chapter 4: Avoiding Legal Pitfalls in Headache SOAP Notes: Key elements to include to protect against malpractice claims.

Chapter 5: Integrating Technology for Efficient Headache SOAP Notes: Utilizing EHR systems and other tools to streamline documentation.

Chapter 6: Improving Communication Through Effective Headache SOAP Notes: Ensuring clarity and consistency for all healthcare providers involved in patient care.

Conclusion: Recap of key takeaways and future implications for SOAP note documentation.

Soap Note Headache: A Comprehensive Guide for Healthcare Professionals

Introduction: The Importance of Accurate and Comprehensive SOAP Notes in Healthcare

SOAP notes—Subjective, Objective, Assessment, Plan—are the cornerstone of patient documentation in healthcare. They provide a concise yet comprehensive record of a patient's encounter, facilitating clear communication between healthcare providers, ensuring continuity of care, and protecting against legal liabilities. While seemingly straightforward, effective SOAP note documentation requires skill and attention to detail, particularly when dealing with complex conditions like headaches. Inaccurate or incomplete SOAP notes concerning headaches can lead to misdiagnosis, inappropriate treatment, and potential harm to the patient. This comprehensive guide will equip healthcare professionals with the knowledge and strategies to create effective and legally sound SOAP notes for patients presenting with headaches.

Chapter 1: Understanding the SOAP Note Format: Subjective, Objective, Assessment, Plan

The SOAP note format provides a structured approach to documenting patient encounters. Let's break down each component:

Subjective (S): This section captures the patient's own description of their symptoms. For headaches, this includes the location, quality (e.g., throbbing, sharp, dull), severity (on a scale of 0-10), duration, frequency, associated symptoms (nausea, vomiting, photophobia, phonophobia), and any triggers or relieving factors. It's crucial to record the patient's words as accurately as possible, using quotation marks when appropriate. Example: "The pain is a throbbing, severe headache (8/10) located in my right temple. It started this morning and has been progressively worsening."

Objective (O): This section contains the observable and measurable findings from the physical examination. For headaches, this may include vital signs (blood pressure, heart rate, temperature), neurological examination (cranial nerve assessment, motor strength, reflexes), and any other relevant physical findings. Objective data should be quantifiable and free from subjective interpretation. Example: "BP 120/80, HR 72, Temp 98.6°F. Neurological exam: Cranial nerves II-XII intact. No focal neurological deficits."

Assessment (A): This section is where the healthcare provider synthesizes the subjective and objective findings to arrive at a diagnosis or differential diagnosis. For headaches, this might include a diagnosis of migraine, tension headache, cluster headache, or other conditions. The assessment should be supported by the evidence presented in the subjective and objective sections. Example: "Likely migraine headache based on patient's description of throbbing unilateral pain, photophobia, and nausea."

Plan (P): This section outlines the treatment plan, including diagnostic tests (e.g., imaging studies, blood tests), medications (with dosages and routes of administration), referrals to specialists, and patient education. The plan should be specific, measurable, achievable, relevant, and time-bound (SMART). Example: "Prescribed sumatriptan 100mg orally as needed for headache pain. Advised patient to avoid known triggers such as caffeine and stress. Scheduled follow-up appointment in one week."

Chapter 2: Common Challenges in SOAP Note Documentation

Several factors can impede the creation of accurate and efficient SOAP notes:

Time Constraints: Busy clinical settings often limit the time available for detailed documentation. Effective time management and use of templates can mitigate this.

Ambiguity: Vague or imprecise language can lead to misinterpretations. Using clear, concise, and medically precise terminology is essential.

Legal Considerations: Incomplete or inaccurate SOAP notes can lead to legal ramifications. Maintaining thorough and accurate documentation is crucial for protecting against malpractice claims.

Electronic Health Record (EHR) Systems: While EHRs offer many benefits, they can also present challenges in terms of usability and workflow. Familiarizing oneself with the specific features of the EHR system used is essential.

Chapter 3: SOAP Note Best Practices for Headache Documentation

This chapter focuses on specific examples and templates for documenting various headache types. It also emphasizes the importance of accurate ICD-10 coding.

Chapter 4: Avoiding Legal Pitfalls in Headache SOAP Notes

This section highlights key elements to include in headache SOAP notes to minimize legal risks. This includes documenting thorough patient history, physical examination findings, differential diagnoses, treatment plans, and informed consent. It also stresses the importance of maintaining accurate and complete records.

Chapter 5: Integrating Technology for Efficient Headache SOAP Notes

This section explores how technology, such as EHR systems and voice-to-text software, can improve efficiency in SOAP note documentation. It covers the advantages and disadvantages of using different technological tools.

Chapter 6: Improving Communication Through Effective Headache SOAP Notes

Clear and consistent documentation is paramount for effective communication among healthcare professionals. This section explores strategies to ensure that SOAP notes are easily understood by all involved in the patient's care.

Conclusion: Recap of key takeaways and future implications for SOAP note documentation. This section reinforces the importance of accurate, thorough, and legally sound SOAP note documentation and emphasizes the role of continuous learning and adaptation to best practices.

FAQs

- 1. What is the difference between a migraine and a tension headache? Migraines are typically characterized by severe, throbbing pain, often unilateral, and accompanied by nausea, vomiting, and sensitivity to light and sound. Tension headaches are usually less severe and described as a dull ache or tightness.
- 2. What information should be included in the subjective section of a headache SOAP note? Include the location, quality, severity, duration, frequency, associated symptoms, and any triggers or relieving factors as described by the patient.
- 3. What are the legal implications of poorly documented headache SOAP notes? Inaccurate or incomplete notes can lead to misdiagnosis, inappropriate treatment, and potential malpractice lawsuits.
- 4. How can I improve the efficiency of my headache SOAP note documentation? Utilize templates, EHR features, and voice-to-text software to streamline the process.
- 5. What are some common mistakes to avoid when documenting headaches? Avoid vague terminology, subjective interpretations, and incomplete information.
- 6. What is the role of ICD-10 coding in headache documentation? Accurate ICD-10 codes are essential for billing and data analysis.
- 7. How can I ensure clear communication through my headache SOAP notes? Use clear, concise language, and avoid medical jargon where possible.
- 8. What are some resources available for improving my SOAP note writing skills? Numerous online resources, medical textbooks, and professional development courses can help.
- 9. What is the importance of regular review and updates to headache SOAP notes? Regular review ensures accuracy, completeness, and consistency over time.

Related Articles

- 1. Migraine Headaches: Diagnosis and Treatment: A detailed overview of migraine headaches, including diagnostic criteria and treatment options.
- 2. Tension Headaches: Management Strategies: A guide to managing tension headaches, focusing on both pharmacological and non-pharmacological approaches.
- 3. Cluster Headaches: A Comprehensive Review: A thorough review of cluster headaches, a severe type of headache often requiring specialized treatment.
- 4. Headache in Children and Adolescents: A guide to diagnosing and managing headaches in pediatric populations.
- 5. The Role of Imaging in Headache Diagnosis: An overview of the appropriate use of imaging studies in the evaluation of headache disorders.
- 6. Headache and Concussion: Differentiating Features: A comparison of headache symptoms associated with concussion versus other types of headaches.
- 7. Medication Overuse Headache: Prevention and Treatment: A discussion of medication overuse headaches and strategies for prevention and management.
- 8. The Impact of Stress on Headache Frequency: An exploration of the relationship between stress and headache development.
- 9. Headache Red Flags: When to Seek Urgent Medical Attention: A guide to identifying potentially serious headache symptoms that require immediate medical attention.

soap note headache: SOAP for Family Medicine Daniel Maldonado, 2018-08-14 Offering step-by-step guidance on how to properly document patient care, this updated Second Edition presents 90 of the most common clinical problems encountered on the wards and clinics in an easy-to-read, two-page layout using the familiar SOAP note format. Emphasizing the patient's clinical problem, not the diagnosis, this pocket-sized quick reference teaches both clinical reasoning and documentation skills and is ideal for use by medical students, Pas, and NPs during the Family Medicine rotation.

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been reviewed and revised to keep the text up-to-date. The following features, long admired among dedicated Bates' users are also retained: · Detailed, beautifully depicted Tables of Abnormalities · Extensive Pediatric chapter · Illustrated Anatomy and Physiology review begins each chapter · Important information on Interviewing Techniques and Patient Communication · Outstanding line art program · Two-column format as guide for physical assessment · Useful Clinical tips throughout The ancillary assets are also being updated to redirect the focus toward higher level nursing students and medical students.

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soap note headache: Evidence-Based Physical Examination Kate Sustersic Gawlik, DNP, APRN-CNP, FAANP, Bernadette Mazurek Melnyk, PhD, APRN-CNP, FAANP, FNAP, FAAN, Alice M. Teall, DNP, APRN-CNP, FAANP, 2020-01-27 The first book to teach physical assessment techniques based on evidence and clinical relevance. Grounded in an empirical approach to history-taking and physical assessment techniques, this text for healthcare clinicians and students focuses on patient well-being and health promotion. It is based on an analysis of current evidence, up-to-date guidelines, and best-practice recommendations. It underscores the evidence, acceptability, and clinical relevance behind physical assessment techniques. Evidence-Based Physical Examination offers the unique perspective of teaching both a holistic and a scientific approach to assessment. Chapters are consistently structured for ease of use and include anatomy and physiology, key history questions and considerations, physical examination, laboratory considerations, imaging considerations, evidence-based practice recommendations, and differential diagnoses related to normal and abnormal findings. Case studies, clinical pearls, and key takeaways aid retention, while abundant illustrations, photographic images, and videos demonstrate history-taking and assessment techniques. Instructor resources include PowerPoint slides, a test bank with multiple-choice questions and essay questions, and an image bank. This is the physical assessment text of the future. Key Features: Delivers the evidence, acceptability, and clinical relevance behind history-taking and assessment techniques Eschews "traditional" techniques that do not demonstrate evidence-based reliability Focuses on the most current clinical guidelines and recommendations from resources such as the U.S. Preventive Services Task Force Focuses on the use of modern technology for assessment Aids retention through case studies, clinical pearls, and key takeaways Demonstrates techniques with abundant illustrations, photographic images, and videos Includes robust instructor resources: PowerPoint slides, a test bank with multiple-choice questions and essay questions, and an image bank Purchase includes digital access for use on most mobile devices or computers

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bring concepts to life. 'How-to' videos on the Evolve companion website show manipulation techniques, body mechanics, positioning and draping, and more. If you want to prepare for licensing and certification exams and succeed in practice, this resource from massage therapy expert Sandy Fritz is your text of choice. - Comprehensive coverage includes all of the fundamentals of therapeutic massage, including massage techniques, equipment and supplies, wellness, working with special populations, and business considerations; it also prepares you for success on licensing and certification exams. - Step-by-step, full-color photographs demonstrate massage techniques and protocols by body area. - Three hours of video on the Evolve website demonstrate techniques and body mechanics — each clip is narrated and performed by author Sandy Fritz — as well as review activities for licensing exams. - Proficiency exercises provide opportunities to practice and apply what you are learning. - Case studies offer practice with clinical reasoning and prepare you to address conditions commonly encountered in professional practice. - Coverage of body mechanics helps you to create an ergonomically effective massage environment and to determine appropriate pressure, drag, and duration application while applying massage methods. - Coverage of multiple charting methods helps you develop record-keeping and documentation skills, including SOAP and computer charting with simulation on Evolve. - Learning features include chapter outlines, objectives, summaries, key terms, practical applications, activities and exercises, and workbook-type practice. - Review tools include matching exercises, short answer questions, fill-in-the-blank questions, drawing exercises, and critical thinking questions, all available on Evolve. - Research Literacy and Evidence-Based Practice chapter includes new research findings and explains how research is done, and how to read and understand it. - Adaptive Massage chapter explains how to address the needs of specific populations, from pregnant women and infants to hospice patients and people with physical impairments. - Massage Career Tracks and Practice Settings chapter covers massage therapy services offered at spas, and looks at the spa as a possible massage career. -In-depth coverage of HIPAA shows how to store records in a HIPAA-compliant manner and explains HIPAA requirements and training. - Foot in the Door boxes outline the professional skills expected by prospective employers. - Updated Basic Pharmacology for the Massage Therapist appendix provides up-to-date information on common medications.

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therapists reflect what you will see in the field as a working practitioner. - NEW! Pain content equips you with essential, up-to-date information on the latest theories and management techniques and provides the critical-thinking skills to apply that knowledge in practice.

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and develop a logical approach to patients' chief complaints by allowing them to partner up as patient and

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Akira Arimura, 2003 Pituitary Adenylate Cyclase-Activating Polypeptide is the first volume to be written on the neuropeptide PACAP. It covers all domains of PACAP from molecular and cellular aspects to physiological activities and promises for new therapeutic strategies. Pituitary Adenylate Cyclase-Activating Polypeptide is the twentieth volume published in the Endocrine Updates book series under the Series Editorship of Shlomo Melmed, MD.

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authors also include a review of existing SDOH frameworks used in public health and medicine and present a comprehensive SDOH model for nursing education. A SDOH educational course content for faculty is detailed (Social Determinants of Health 101) and exemplars from faculty and students are provided along with an evaluation after the first year. The authors conclude with a discussion from faculty leadership; what they learned and their suggestions to other nursing programs. Although there are books published, no books exist on this topic for nursing education and practicing nurses, yet SDOH is foundational to nursing curriculum and practice. The leading nursing organizations are all mandating that SDOH be integrated into nursing courses. Hence this textbook will be a key resource for Schools of Nursing in the US and globally. The intended audience of this book are leaders and faculty of nursing education programs, national professional nursing organizations, practicing nurses at hospitals and health systems, community and public health agencies, and ambulatory care.

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