

Legal Standards in Healthcare

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1. Introduction

- Legal standards are the benchmarks that define acceptable conduct in healthcare.
- They protect patients and establish accountability for providers.

2. The Standard of Care

- **Standard of care:** the level of skill and diligence a reasonably competent professional would provide.
- It is judged against accepted practice and professional guidelines.

3. Negligence and Liability

- Negligence requires duty, breach, causation, and harm to be proven.
- **Malpractice:** professional negligence by a healthcare provider.
- Providers may face civil liability and compensation claims.

4. Documentation and Records

- Accurate, timely records are a legal requirement and evidence of care.
- Poor documentation can increase legal risk.

5. Regulatory Compliance

- Facilities must meet licensing, safety, and quality regulations.
- Professional councils enforce registration and disciplinary standards.

6. Summary

- Legal standards center on the standard of care and accountability.
- Meeting them protects patients and shields providers from liability.