

# Patient Status: Outpatient in a Bed

By Del Cappelini Gallivan and Kathleen Henderson

Patients need an appropriate transition plan to safely discharge from the Emergency Department (ED) or procedural areas. At times, a patient will need to remain in the hospital despite meeting medical necessity criteria for Outpatient Observation (OBS) services or Inpatient (IP), so the healthcare provider can prepare an appropriate plan. Designating these individuals as Outpatient in a Bed (OPIB) provides a way for hospitals to clearly identify and appropriately manage them until they can be safely discharged or transitioned.

## Purpose of an Outpatient in a Bed

- **The OPIB designation** provides a way to classify patients occupying acute care beds in a hospital while waiting for arrangements for an appropriate discharge and provides a way to reflect a patient's needs for the following:
- **Post outpatient surgery/procedures:** A patient is placed in an outpatient bed overnight for monitoring and treatment when there are no complications.

- **Outpatient Treatment:** A patient is receiving a blood transfusion, hemodialysis, or chemotherapy, and no observation or inpatient services are needed.
- **Social Admission:** A patient is placed in a bed for the convenience of the patient, family, or doctor, often through the ED.

## Status and Designation

### Outpatient with Observation Services (OBS)

is used when a physician places a patient in observation care. The purpose of observation services is to determine the need for further treatment and whose length of stay (LOS) is not expected to span more than two midnights. Observation services have a start and stop time with inclusion and exclusion criteria and determine if care should be provided an inpatient setting or in a lower level of care. Outpatient observation services are not to be used for the convenience of the hospital, its physicians, patients or patient's families, or while awaiting placement to another healthcare facility.

### Outpatient Procedure (Extended Recovery)

is used in many institutions interchangeably with observation or 23-hour observation. It is recommended to utilize observation, OPIB, or IP designations.

**Outpatient in a Bed** is used for patients without medical necessity for admission but cannot be discharged due to an unsafe discharge plan.

**Inpatient Status (IP)** is used for patients with a medical necessity and whose LOS is reasonably expected to span more than two midnights. An inpatient order should be written for this admission, and the patient should remain inpatient for the duration of their hospital stay.

## Impact for Hospital

- Decrease the risk of denials by preventing inappropriate billing of OBS.
- Improve statistical reporting by representing a more accurate hospital observation LOS by classifying medical patients who no longer need observation services as OPIB.
- Enable the utilization review nurse to prioritize the observation of patients requiring more frequent medical necessity review.
- Increase awareness of the care team about outpatient designations.

## Leading Practice

A health system should design a process that identifies appropriate patients for an OPIB designation, converts the patient type in the electronic medical record (EMR), and manages the

patient throughout the remainder of the stay. After developing a future state process, senior leadership should review metrics and reporting to determine the optimal bed capacity management and staffing coverage. All care team members should be aware of the OPIB designation to provide appropriate patient care management.

## REFERENCES

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