

MEDICAL AND PUBLIC HEALTH SECRETARY IN THAILAND'S PRIVATE HOSPITALS

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ABSTRACT

The highest medical standard is the topmost issue in this century. The higher number of lawsuit in medical field is the big problem in both practitioners and the hospitals. Private hospitals have more impact on this issue compare to the public hospital. To reduce this problem, the hospitals need to improve their quality to reach the international standard of care. These processes need the staff with the knowledge of administration, medical and public health system and medical terminology. In Thailand, nurses are the first team of the most hospital. They are expected to do these processes because of their knowledge about the hospital and medical terminology. However, the administration processes are lacking.

There are 321 private hospitals in Thailand, 42 of these are JCI accredited in hospital program. The total of 30,880 beds and 108,019 servicing staff. The 17665 nurses and 17794 nurse aids are not enough for the nursing care. If they need to switch to the quality assurance process, the quality of nursing care will be affected.

Medical and public health secretary is the staff to fill up these processes. They work with the knowledge of basic medical system, terminology and administration. The additional knowledge of the quality assurance is suitable for the hospitals and public health organizations. In Thailand, this program for medical and public health secretary is in 3 universities. Rajabhat Suandusit, Rajabhat Suan Sunandha and Christian university may have in total of 200 graduated per years. Apart from the private hospitals, the public hospitals are the further need. The requirement of medical and public health secretary will remain high to fulfill the need of the country.

Key words: medical secretary, private hospital, quality assurance

INTRODUCTION

The highest medical standard is the topmost issue in this century. The usage of advance technology is the main assisting of higher medical standard. It followed by higher hospital cost with higher expectation of the patients and families. However, the new advance technologies reduce but do not eliminate the complication. The higher number of lawsuits in medical field remain the big problems in both practitioners and hospitals. To reduce these problems, understanding in demand of the patients and improving the services are the key success factors of service providers. The hospitals need to improve their quality to reach the national or international standard of care. These processes need the staff with the knowledge of administration, medical and public health system and medical terminology.

In Thailand, many medical standards are introduced to practice. Lacking of the budget to have specialized personal in public hospitals, nurses are the first team to do these processes in most hospitals. They are expected to do these processes because of their knowledge about the hospital and medical terminology. However, the administration processes are lacking.

Private hospitals are the business units involved in these problems, too. The power of the profit is the pushing force to fulfill the gap. They need to follow the international level of medical standard to reduce the risk of lawsuits. However, who is the suitable personal to do these job.

SITUATION

There are 4 main types of health insurance in Thailand as

1. Social security
2. Workman's compensation fund
3. Private health insurance
4. Universal coverage

Due to the increasing cost of technology and treatment, these main third party payers require the hospital to have higher standard quality of care. The quality assurance is the "must do" process, especially in the private sector. The specific departments are established for this issue.

There are 321 private hospitals in Thailand with the total beds of 30,880 beds. The total patient visit of 46.33 million visits, which was 43.32 million of Thai and 3.01 million of foreigner.

Table 1

Number of visiting in private hospitals

	Out patient	Admission	Total
Thai patient	41,292,328	2,033,630	43,325,958
Foreign patient	2,865,970	143,200	3,009,169
Total	44,158,298	2,176,829	46,335,127

The total staff of these 321 private hospitals are 137,598. The 108,019 staff are full time staff and 29,578 are part-time staff. There are variety of staff in many departments but no medical secretary. By excluding the executive level, only in services, providing medical care for 44.1 million outpatient visits, and 2.2 million admissions. 56.2% of the staff are in the field of nursing care, composed of 17665 nurses, 17794 nurse aids and others positions. These are not enough for the nursing care of such huge services to the patients. If they need to switch their staff to the quality assurance process, the quality of nursing care will be affected.

Table 2

Number of staff in private hospitals

Group	Position	Number
Executive	Director and others	8,887
Medical care	Doctor and dentist	24,545
	Nurse	25,377
	Nurse aid and assistance	27,475
Medical service	Pharmacist	2,887
	Technician	4,865
	Other medical services	9,852
Hospital service	Hospital service	33,712
Total		137,598

QUALITY ASSURANCE

The attitude of the patients to the hospital are changing from treatment by fiduciary relationship to become business. The patients and their relatives may feel like buying service or something. The demand of satisfactory services needs to match with their expectation and payment. Private hospitals have more impact on this issue compare to the public hospital. Quality assurance is one of the tool to standardize the practice and make the service more accuracy.

The basic quality assurance practicing in Thailand is hospital accreditation (HA). Most of the local hospital need to pass the HA. However, according to the policy of Thailand as a medical hub with the large number of foreign patient, nearly 7% of all hospital services, the international quality assurance is necessary. JCI, Joint Commission International, is one of the most accepted international standard in medical service. There are 61 accredited medical service in Thailand, but only 42 private hospitals are JCI accredited in hospital program. The remaining hospital need to do hard work to achieve the accreditation. The limitation of nursing staff compare to the large amount of patient and the high salary of medical staff is the point to be considered.

MEDICAL AND PUBLIC HEALTH SECRETARY

What is Medical and public health secretary? This is the new issue in Thailand. Instead of hiring bachelor degree in business and management field without the basic knowledge of the health system. Instead of calling the nurses from nursing care to train the management and administration. Medical and public health secretary program was introduced to the universities. There are only 3 out of 138 universities in Thailand having the course related to medical and public health secretary, Rajabhat Suandusit, Rajabhat Suan Sunandha and Christian university may have in total of 200 graduated per years. The graduated number remains low in contrast of high demand of this profession especially in private medical sector.

The medical system in Thailand including the whole range of service from small unit of clinic to the large medical center and university hospital will need the large number of the qualified, well trained medical and public health secretary. However, the private hospitals who are the pioneer in international accreditation still have a very big demand as mentioned.

International level medical assurance is the target of medical and public health secretary. They need to understand the protocol of these standard as well as their hospital. The process of quality procedure and how to improve the hospital. The guideline of medical management will protect and prevent the hospital and the caregiver to the lawsuit.

In the world of information and borderless knowledge, it is easy for the patient and family to have medical data and information to compare the treatment in the hospital. Academic medical conference is another tool to improve and update medical knowledge. Medical and public health secretary should be capable to organize the scientific or medical conference as well.

Medical coding, the systematic record of the diseases and procedures, is source the hospital's information to improve their services and quality of care. The medical and public health secretary will assist the doctor to do coding in the system. The analysis of the data will help both doctor and hospital to manage the system for the best services.

The hospital administration and other hospital services are the other part of this field. The career pathway can be the executive level of the hospital or higher organization in the ministry of public health. However, some old idea remains claimed the medical and public health secretary as only an assistance for doctor's appointment or do some trivial paperwork.

SUMMARY

The medical and public health secretary is the position with highly demand in the private hospital in Thailand. The need in public hospital and government sector will followed. This is the new channel of profession in this country. However, inadequate of graduated in this field needs to be pushed by the government policy. This is not for the public health system, but for the patient to receive the higher standard of care under the international level quality assurance. The argument in the lawsuit will be reduced and the relationship of the patient and doctor will return to as it used to.

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