**IDEAS FOR EFFECTIVE USE OF “DOWN-TIME” IN THE CLINIC**

No matter how hard you try, inevitably there are days (or weeks) during clinical rotations where census has fallen and there are not enough patients to fill a full day. What follows are some suggestions to help turn these “down-times” into learning opportunities.

* Have the student prepare for a future patient by doing chart-review and treatment planning.
* Ask the student to research information about a particular diagnosis, symptoms, treatments, lab values, medications, acronyms, etc… that the student has seen.
* Allow the student to spend extra time with a patient (without billing) for learning purposes.
* Practice documentation and billing principles.
* Role-play and practice new or difficult techniques.
* Arrange for students to shadow or assist other therapists who are busier, work with different patient populations, or have an interesting case.
* Let the student sit in on a PT evaluation, and then allow the student to follow-through with the care of that same patient.
* Arrange for students to shadow another discipline to experience their role.
* Give students the opportunity to sit in on (or participate in) a care conference or team meeting.
* Schedule for the student to observe a surgery (where applicable).
* Have student research and present information on a clinical topic of interest to you.
* Review skills with the student that may be unrelated to your particular setting, but may be helpful to the student in future settings.
* Provide the student with reference materials related to techniques used in your clinic.
* Have the student complete “practice questions” for the National Board Exam (each student has a text and CD with these questions), and review with the student any questions they got wrong.
* Allow student to research information required to complete any of the assignments that have been given to them that are to be completed by the end of their clinical.
* Ask the student to create a unique exercise or treatment directed at achieving a particular goal for a patient (challenge them to come up with something appropriate that you have never seen or done before).