



## Starting a FEES Program

~4 To-Do's to Prepare~

- 1) **Start talking about FEES.** Talk to anyone and everyone at your facility who will listen. This includes your SLP colleagues, rehab manager, nurses, physicians and hospital leadership staff. At many hospitals the leadership staff (President, CFO, CNO, COO, etc) will walk the halls and round with staff on a regular basis. When they ask how you are doing or what they can do for, you better take this opportunity to give them your “elevator pitch” about FEES (more on elevator pitch later). Talk to the physicians whose patients may have the greatest benefit, i.e., intensivists, neurosurgeons, cardiothoracic surgeons, etc. You will want their support down the line in the form of writing letters of support or a signature on a grant application.
- 2) **Start taking data.** When you have a patient, who would benefit from FEES, write it down. Include the date, the reason why the FEES is appropriate. Include if patient care was delayed due to lack of access to FEES or other instrumentals or any concerns regarding patient safety. An example might be a patient unable to have an MBSS due to radiology scheduling, therefore they remained NPO for 3 days, delaying them receiving appropriate nutrition and delaying possible discharge. Write down EVERY patient that you think may benefit and this will give you clear data to show hospital leadership where the missed opportunities have been.
- 3) **Start building your library.** Collect research articles that demonstrate the benefit of FEES and the value of instrumental swallow evaluations. Many hospitals provide staff with access to medical libraries where you can search the database. There will also often be a librarian that can help you find the articles you are looking for if you are unable to locate them yourself. You may also consider subscribing to a journal publication in order to get access to full text articles. Another option would be to research medical libraries in your area.
- 4) **Start looking into funding options.** There may be a few ways to go about this. There is the yearly allotment of money that is allocated to your rehab department for supplies such as walkers and wheelchairs. It is unlikely that this allotment of money will be enough to cover your FEES equipment, but it may be enough for general supplies to sustain your FEES program i.e., green food dye, enzymatic cleaner. Your facility should have a Capital Budget and may also have options for grants. Find out how to submit a project proposal for these funding opportunities. There may be specific requirements or proposal requests to apply for funding.

**If you are interested in building a FEES program at your hospital or facility, but don't know where to go from here, reach out to me and I can help!**

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