

# HOSPICE SERVICE UPDATE

As a physician referring patients for hospice, it's essential you know about a new Medicare requirement. On January 1, 2011, CMS will require mandated face-to-face physician visits that affect hospice agencies across the United States.

## What:

- Any patient on hospice 180 days and beyond will be required to have a face-to-face visit by the hospice medical director prior to recertification to determine appropriateness for continued hospice eligibility. A patient must comply with this mandate, or services cannot continue and the patient will be discharged from service.
- If a patient is discharged from one hospice and wishes to be re-admitted to another, a face-to-face physician visit will be required in order to determine eligibility by the admitting hospice.
- The patient's PCP cannot perform this visit. It is to be provided as a service by the employed hospice physician or nurse practitioner of the Medicare-certified hospice.

## Why:

- To determine appropriateness for continued hospice eligibility and prevention of governmental fraud.

## How this affects you:

- Patients who have been on hospice longer than six months, or discharged due to stability, must have a face-to-face visit by the hospice medical director **before** readmission to hospice or recertification for hospice to continue.
- Determination of patient eligibility could be delayed due to face-to-face mandates and government office hours, which are closed on weekends and holidays.
- Hospitalized patients wishing to be admitted to hospice upon discharge could experience delays due to the new requirements.

For more information, go to: [www.CMS.gov](http://www.CMS.gov)

Providence Hospice values the trust you continue to place in our ability to care for your patients and families during the final stage of life. Providence remains unique in the availability of home health and palliative care support under our home health umbrella of services. As such, any of your patients that may no longer meet hospice eligibility may be eligible for other Providence services.

I am available for any questions regarding these regulations or to assist with any particular patient concern.

Sincerely,

Dorece Norris MD  
Medical Director  
Providence Hospice

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