



New CMS Regulations Affecting Physicians starting January 1, 2011

A HOME HEALTH SERVICE UPDATE

Since you refer patients for home care, it's essential that you be made aware of a new requirement that will affect physicians who order - and the patients they refer - for Medicare home care services.

As of January 1, 2011, CMS has required the following changes for ordering home health services across all of the United States.

What: A Face to Face Encounter is Required and Must be Documented

- To receive home health services, patients being referred to home care are required to have had a face-to-face visit by their physician or an authorized non-physician practitioner.
- This encounter must occur within 90 days prior to the start of home care and include documentation by the physician of how the patient's clinical condition during that encounter supports the patient's home-bound status and need for skilled services.
- In situations where a physician orders home health care for the patient based upon a new condition that was not evident during a visit within 90 days prior to start of care, the certifying physician or authorized non-physician must see the patient within 30 days of home care start of care.

How this affects you:

- Patients being referred from your office will need to have had a face-to-face encounter 90 days prior or within the 30 days after start of home care.
- If your patient is hospitalized and needs home care services to begin upon discharge, and if a hospitalist is involved, that hospitalist will be asked to document the face to face encounter. The physician following the patient will continue to be responsible to review and sign off the plan of care.

For more information, go to: www.CMS.gov

For questions and guidance to meet this new requirement, please call:

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