

Summary of CMS' December ODF for HH, Hospice and DME

December 15, 2005

Dear PMC Members:

On Thursday, December 15, 2005, the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) hosted their monthly Open Door Forum (ODF) on Home Health (HH), Hospice, and Durable Medical Equipment (DME). Natalie Johnson and Winnie Pizzano moderated the forum. It was learned that Dr. Rich Lawlor, who had moderated this ODF for the past several years, has recently left CMS for the private sector.

Updates:

Interim Final Rule

John Warren from CMS' Office of Program Integrity reiterated that the comment period for the local coverage determinations (LCDs) is closed despite the fact that CMS delayed coding reform. At the present time, DMERCs will follow the LCDs as set out on each their websites and LCDs will not be finalized until the new coding has been released.

PMC Director, Eric Sokol asked Warren about concerns that physicians are being denied payments by the DMERCs when submitting new "G-code" reimbursement for providing documentation to suppliers under the IFR. Warren explained that physicians should submit G-code claims to their local carriers and not the DMERCs. If local carriers are rejecting physician reimbursement under the IFR, Warren asked that examples be forwarded to his office.

Competitive Bidding and Quality Standards

Mike Keane, CMS' point person for implementation of competitive bidding, mentioned that final details are being made to the competitive bidding regulation, but that the rule should be released soon. A notice of when to expect the rule will be posted on the DMEPOS Competitive Bidding webpage. In addition, background and details of the rule will be the focus of the next Provider Oversight and Advisory Committee (PAOC) meeting that will be scheduled soon after release of the rule.

CMS is still expecting that final quality standards will be released in the Spring of 2006. They have received many comments, and while they have treated the development of standards like a proposed rule, Congress allows CMS to issue the standards via Program Instructions which do not require public notice and comment.

The January ODF for HH, Hospice and DME is scheduled for January 18, 2006. As always, the PMC will provide details on how to participate in the ODF once available.