

Part B Insider (Multispecialty) Coding Alert

Physician Notes: Avoid Stamped Physician Signatures on Durable Medical Equipment Forms

Plus: If a CERT auditor requests just one record, treat the request the same as if the auditor requested 100 records.

If you've become accustomed to using stamped physician signatures on durable medical equipment forms, it's time to change that habit.

In 2007, CMS announced a ban on stamped physician signatures for hospice forms, then last year said stamped signatures were out for HHA forms too. Now it's clarifying that stamped signatures and stamped dates won't work for DME forms, according to Dec. 31, 2008 CR 6261 (Transmittal No. 281).

"Signature and date stamps are not acceptable for use on CMNs (certificates of medical necessity) and DIFs (DME MAC information forms)," CMS says in the transmittal.

"Your Medicare contractors will accept only hand written, facsimiles of original written and electronic signatures and dates on medical record documentation for medical review purposes on CMNs and DIFs," CMS adds in a MLN Matters article on the subject.

The transmittal is at www.cms.hhs.gov/transmittals/downloads/R281PI.pdf. The MLN Matters article is online at www.cms.hhs.gov/MLNMattersArticles/downloads/MM6261.pdf.