

Part B Insider (Multispecialty) Coding Alert

Physician Notes: CMS Debuts New Face-to-Face Home Health Clinical Template

Plus: Payer misplaces PHI of nearly one million patients.

Physicians who certify patients for home health care were seeking more help with what their cert form should include—and CMS has delivered with a new document entitled "Progress Note Guidance."

The form, which the agency debuted last month, gives physicians specific questions to answer and guidelines to follow to ensure that the home health certification goes smoothly. Doctors are not required to use the form, but it can help them keep track of all of the required elements.

As most practices are aware, the face-to-face encounter must take place "no more than 90 days prior to the home health start of care date or within 30 days of the start of home health care," and must be related to the primary reason the patient needs home health services.

Resource: To access and print the new form, visit

http://www.reginfo.gov/public/do/PRAViewIC?ref_nbr=201512-0938-012&icID=219423. Then click on "Progress Note and Guidance" under the column marked "form name."

In other news...

Your practice would be in quite a bind if it misplaced the protected health information (PHI) of 950 patients—now multiply that number tenfold, and that's the issue facing health insurer Centene.

The payer announced this week that it is missing six hard drives that held the PHI of about 950,000 patients. Although Centene stressed that the information does not appear to have been used inappropriately and that it doesn't include any financial information, the insurer did note that the hard drives contain names, addresses, dates of birth, Social Security numbers and other identifiers of patients who underwent lab services from 2009 to 2015.

"Centene takes the privacy and security of our members' information seriously," said Centene CEO **Michael F. Neidorff** in a Jan. 25 statement. "While we don't believe this information has been used inappropriately, out of abundance of caution and in transparency, we are disclosing an ongoing search for the hard drives." The company is also offering free credit and healthcare monitoring to the impacted patients.