

Eli's Rehab Report

READER QUESTIONS: Electronic Signatures Are A-OK

Question: Lately, when a physician has authorized additional therapy for our patients, our Medicare contractor has put the requests on hold. Their reasoning is that they are not accepting electronic signatures, as this is a new requirement from the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services. Where does CMS say in writing that electronic signatures are not acceptable?

-- Texas subscriber

Answer: Electronic signatures are still acceptable. A recent policy change, however, did away with accepting stamped signatures. Perhaps your Medicare contractor is confusing the two under this new policy. Contact your Medicare contractor with the following information: According to CMS Pub 100-02, Chapter 15, page 150, "Medicare requires a legible identifier for services provided/ordered. The method used shall be hand written or an electronic signature (stamp signatures are not acceptable) to sign an order or other medical record documentation for medical review purposes."

As you can see, electronic signatures are still acceptable. You might, however, want to check your claims and make sure the signature is legible since CMS has emphasized that point.