

Eli's Hospice Insider

COVID-19: Hospice Captures 5% Of COVID-19 Discharges

After death, most discharges are to home.

New Medicare beneficiary data may help you fill in the COVID-19 picture - and figure out your part in it.

The **Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services** has released an "early snapshot of the impact of the coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) pandemic on the Medicare population," the agency says in a release. The snapshot contains data from Jan. 1 through May 16.

While 326,674 Medicare beneficiaries had a diagnosis of COVID-19 in that time period - B97.29 (other coronavirus as the cause of diseases classified elsewhere) before April 1 and U07.1 (2019 Novel Coronavirus, COVID-19) after - nearly 100,000 were hospitalized for COVID-19-related treatment. For reference, nearly 1.4 million COVID-19 cases were reported in the U.S. overall at that time.

The lion's share of inpatient discharges were for death (27.9 percent), the new data shows. Then came discharges to home without home care (26.9 percent), to skilled nursing facilities (21.1 percent), and then to home health (11.4 percent). Finally, discharges to hospice made up 5.3 percent of inpatient discharges, to "another facility" 4.7 percent, to assisted living facilities/nursing homes 1.7 percent, and "other" 0.5 percent, the data shows.



CMS also breaks down COVID-19 cases and hospitalizations by the following categories: state, rural/ urban, age group, race, sex, dual status, time, Medicare payment levels, and more categories.

Snapshot data shows "older Americans and those with chronic health conditions are at the highest risk for COVID-19 and should continue to take extra precautions to protect their health and safety," stresses CMS Administrator **Seema Verma** in a blog post about the data.

Value-based reimbursement could help address the disparities by social determinants of health and socioeconomic status, CMS urges in its release. "Under a value-based system, providers are rewarded for actually keeping patients healthy and improving quality and outcomes," Verma says in her blog post. "Many of the rules and requirements that CMS has promulgated over the years have become out-of-date, and they are standing in the way of innovation and progress."

The data comes from "original" Medicare fee-for-service claims and Medicare Advantage encounter data, CMS specifies.

CMS plans monthly updates to the data, as well as a Medicaid version in the future.

Note: Access the snapshot data at

www.cms.gov/research-statistics-data-systems/preliminary-medicare-covid-19-data-snapshot.