Eli's Hospice Insider

Hospice News: CMS Paves The Way For Data Collection On Visit Numbers, Length

Feds want data on a wide array of hospice services.

The **Centers for Medicare & Medicaid** Services wants more hospice data. On Dec. 4, CMS released a proposal on Possible Future Hospice Data Collection, seeking public comments on what kinds of data the agency should collect to better evaluate trends in utilization of the Medicare hospice benefit.

The proposed data collection comes in response to years of requests for more data from the **HHS Office of Inspector General**, **Medicare Payment Advisory Commission** and the **Government Accountability Office**, not to mention lawmakers. Specifically, CMS is considering collecting data on paid hospice chaplain and counselor visits, as well as visit length (in 15-minute increments) on a line-item basis on hospice claims. Line item visit data, including visit length, may also come under scrutiny.

CMS is also considering collecting data on visits by nurses, aides, social workers, therapists, chaplains and counselors on or after the date of the patient's death. CMS wants to examine claims for durable medical equipment, medical supplies, and prescription and over-the-counter drugs as well.

In conjunction with the proposed data collection effort, CMS wants to revise hospice cost reports. "Hospice cost reports have not been comprehensively updated for years, and yet the industry has undergone changes which affect cost reporting," the agency states. CMS will publish a Federal Register notice on revising the hospice cost reports sometime in the near future.