

Eli's Hospice Insider

Hospice News: Don't Date Stamp Hospice Terminal Illness Certs Unless You Want Denials

Put away those date stamps for your hospice patients' terminal illness certification, or risk technical denials for your claims.

"Medical review can no longer accept stamped or handwritten 'dates received' as validation of timeliness of the certification," Medicare contractor

National Government Services says in a new article on its website. "Physicians must sign and date the initial certification and any subsequent certifications of terminal illness."

Pitfall: "Providers should not predate the PCTI prior to sending them for signature by the physician," NGS instructs hospices in the article. Docs can't just put down "third benefit period," NGS adds. "You must identify the actual certification dates and not the certification period."

If a physician fails to date the certification with exact dates, refer to the Medicare Benefit Policy Manual for help, NGS advises. "A notarized statement or some other acceptable documentation can be obtained to verify when the certification was obtained," the manual says.

Warning: "The notarized statement should be obtained prior to billing Medicare and should not be obtained after an Additional Development Request (ADR) is generated," stresses NGS, which is a subcontractor for HHH MAC **NHIC**.

For a free copy of and link to the NGS article, e-mail editor Rebecca Johnson at rebecca@eliresearch.com with "Hospice cert signatures" in the subject line.