

## Eli's Hospice Insider

### Hospice News: HEART Preparation Moves To The Next Phase

**You're likely one step closer to a required assessment tool.**

In its final rule for 2018 hospice payment, the **Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services** said it would be moving forward with testing its new patient assessment tool, and now it's taking steps to do so.

In the rule, CMS pledged to pilot test the tool thoroughly. The HEART development process will include "conducting small-scale pilot tests ... [and] conducting a larger, national test to establish reliability and validity of items and determine appropriate use of each item, providing ongoing opportunities for input and engagement from the hospice community," CMS noted in the rule published in the Aug. 4 Federal Register.

Now CMS has announced the timeline for those "small-scale pilot tests" and wrapped up recruiting for the first one. On Oct. 31, HEART contractor **RTI** closed the application period for participating in "Pilot A." RTI aimed to recruit hospices "with varying characteristics (size, location, organizational features)," according to a HEART project pilot overview sheet.

RTI will run Pilot A for six weeks in January and February, then in March will hold "debriefing calls with all hospice pilot sites to collect qualitative data about their data collection and submission processes."

After some RTI analysis and, presumably, tool modification, RTI will run Pilot B from June to September including the same round of training, data collection, debriefing calls, and analysis, according to the overview.

The overview doesn't address the next step - the national pilot test CMS mentions in the rule.

More information about the pilot test is at

[www.cms.gov/Medicare/Quality-Initiatives-Patient-Assessment-Instruments/Hospice-Quality-Reporting/HQRP-Requirements-and-Best-Practices.html](http://www.cms.gov/Medicare/Quality-Initiatives-Patient-Assessment-Instruments/Hospice-Quality-Reporting/HQRP-Requirements-and-Best-Practices.html) - see the HEART pilot documents in the "Downloads" box.