

## Eli's Hospice Insider

### Hospice News: Know The Ins And Outs Of When You Can Use Televisit HIS Data - And When You Can't

**Beware: Televisits don't count for imminent death measures.**

If you're not sure whether you can use data from telemedicine visits for Hospice Item Set collection, check out recent guidance from Medicare officials on the topic.

**Question:** "Are we going to be allowed to extract information to complete the HIS based on care processes performed and documented during a telehealth encounter instead of from an in-person visit?" a provider asks the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services in a recent question-and-answer pair.



**Answer:** "For HIS items data collection purposes (excluding section O related to Hospice Visits When Death is Imminent), hospices may use information gathered via telecommunication technology for routine home care patient visits," CMS says. "Responses to items on the HIS can be selected by the assessing clinician as part of the patient visit/assessment, including telehealth encounters, or can be based on information documented in the clinical record and abstracted on or before the completion deadline."

In the other Q&A, CMS points out that "telecommunications are not part of the definition of a visit for hospices providing care under the Hospice Visits When Death is Imminent Measure Pair. Therefore, telehealth visits cannot be included in section O of the Hospice Item Set (HIS)."

See more detail in the Q&A set in the Hospice Quality Reporting Program Quarterly Updates for April-September 2020 at [www.cms.gov/files/document/hqrp-2020-quarter-23-newsletterjuly-2020.pdf](http://www.cms.gov/files/document/hqrp-2020-quarter-23-newsletterjuly-2020.pdf), Section 8.

#### 2021 Hospice Rates Are Transmittal Official

The 2021 hospice payment rates have officially hit the books. Consult CR 11876 at [www.cms.gov/files/document/r10338cp.pdf](http://www.cms.gov/files/document/r10338cp.pdf) for the rates, cap, wage index, and pricer information included in this year's final rule.

#### Public Light Shines On COVID-19 Practices During Surge

Exceptional times call for exceptional practices, but will it appear that way to the public? A number of New Orleans hospices are finding out, due to a new exposé by investigative journalism organization ProPublica.

In a lengthy story called "Sent Home To Die," ProPublica examines both hospital and hospice policies, procedures, and actions regarding COVID-19 patients who were discharged from the hospital to hospice at home or in a hospice facility at the height of the city's surge in April. The story highlights differences in care and outcomes for Black and white patients, as well as substitution of in-person hospice visits with telemedicine visits, among many topics.

The article is at [www.propublica.org/article/sent-home-to-die](http://www.propublica.org/article/sent-home-to-die).