

Eli's Hospice Insider

Hospice News: Surveys To Happen More Often If OIG Gets Its Way

Hospice goes 22 years with no surveys.

Does getting surveyed about once a decade sound good to you? It doesn't to the **HHS Office of Inspector General**.

The OIG repeated a 2007 study of hospice survey intervals and found that the frequency of recertification surveys has not improved since 2005, it says in a new report. Seventeen percent of state-surveyed hospices had not been recertified within the prior six years. In 12 states, more than 25 percent of hospices had not been recertified within the previous six years.

Among that 25 percent, "the average length of time between the most recent survey and the index date was 8.8 years," the OIG reveals. One hospice went 22 years between surveys.

Worst offenders: In Oklahoma, 73 percent of hospices weren't surveyed within six years. In Idaho, 69 percent of agencies weren't surveyed in that time frame.

Recommendation: "We reiterate the recommendation that [the **Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services**] seek statutory or regulatory timeframes for the frequency of hospice recertification surveys," the OIG urges. "CMS could consider setting this survey frequency standard at 3 years, to match the 3-year interval used by accrediting organizations (as approved by CMS); however, given resource limitations, setting a mandatory frequency □ even for an interval of more than 3 years □ could help to ensure improvement in survey frequency and avoid lengthy intervals between surveys for individual hospices."

The report is at <http://oig.hhs.gov/oei/reports/oei-06-13-00130.pdf>.