

Eli's Hospice Insider

Regulation: Get Ready For Satisfaction Surveys -- But They Won't Target Patients

What do you want CMS to ask your patients' family and friends?

You can expect yet another quality-of-care reporting tool in your future ☐ only this time, the **Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services** wants to rate your care by your patients' friends and family members.

And you can also give your proverbial two cents, according to a Jan. 24 Federal Register Request for Information that asks for input on developing a hospice satisfaction survey. The notice stems from a section of the July 2012 proposed rule, which covered the Hospice Quality Reporting Program and CMS's desire to create a care experience survey for hospice, explains the **National Association for Home Care & Hospice**.

From the proposed survey, CMS wants to find out two things:

- 1) Patient experiences throughout hospice care, reported by their family members and friends; and
- 2) Family members' and friends' experiences regarding hospice.

Why Survey Will Target Family Members/Friends

The new survey will be a Consumer Assessment of Healthcare Providers and Systems survey, similar to those that home health agencies, hospitals and other providers use, NAHC says. But instead of surveying patients, the CMS Hospice Survey will query bereaved family members and close friends.

Why? "The reasons for focusing on family members/friends are that the patient is not the best source of information for the entire trajectory of hospice care, and that many hospice patients are very ill and unable to answer survey questions," NAHC explains.

Prepare For A Ripple Effect

CMS is seeking comments on potential topics to include in the survey, such as communication with providers, pain control and non-pain symptom management, NAHC notes. And CMS is also seeking publicly available instruments for capturing hospice care experiences.

"We are interested in instruments and items that can measure quality of care from the family member/friend's perspective, including all potential hospice settings (for example, home, nursing home, hospital, and free-standing hospice) and instruments that track changes over time," NAHC says.

A small break: The CMS Hospice Survey may seem like yet another burdensome bureaucratic hassle, but CMS notes that the projected implementation would be in succession of the HQRP data set ☐ meaning that the survey implementation would not occur within the same year as the data set.