

## Eli's Hospice Insider

### Regulations: Hospices Get More Breathing Room On Assessment Tool Onset

**Plus: Don't miss this vital letter bearing bad news from your MAC.**

Medicare's work on the hospice patient assessment tool continues.

**Next up:** The **Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services** will hold another Special Open Door Forum on the tool formerly known as the Hospice Evaluation and Assessment Reporting Tool (HEART) on Sept. 12, a CMS staffer said in the agency's July 9 Open Door Forum for home care and hospice providers. The slides from CMS's last forum on the topic, held June 12, are in the "Downloads" section at [www.cms.gov/Medicare/Quality-Initiatives-Patient-Assessment-Instruments/Hospice-Quality-Reporting/HEART.html](http://www.cms.gov/Medicare/Quality-Initiatives-Patient-Assessment-Instruments/Hospice-Quality-Reporting/HEART.html).

CMS is planning to convene a focus group to help inform the tool's development, the speaker explained. "There will be significant interaction between CMS and stakeholders, as we want the hospice assessment tool to meet stakeholder needs and be supported by users," CMS notes on its HEART website. "Our goal is to have a hospice assessment tool that enables providers to use it as part of the plan of care and CMS to calculate quality measures based on the data."

**Plus:** CMS also addressed APU notification letters in the forum. The agency is now beginning to send out official notification to providers initially identified as noncompliant with Hospice Quality Reporting Program requirements, a CMS official told providers.

Noncompliance will reduce hospices' payment update for fiscal year 2020, which starts Oct. 1. Hospices deemed noncompliant will receive letters from their HHH Medicare Administrative Contractor, as well as notification in their CASPER folders.

**No news is good news:** Compliant hospices won't receive any letter, the CMS staffer clarified.