

Long-Term Care Survey Alert

Industry Notes

Submit Your Suggestions On SNF Therapy Payments

If you have ideas about how the **Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services** (CMS) should pay for therapy services in skilled nursing facilities (SNFs), now is your chance to be heard.

CMS has contracted with the **Brookings Institution and Acumen** in a research project to identify possible alternatives to the existing methodology used to pay for therapy under the SNF Prospective Payment System (PPS), according to a Feb. 14 CMS Open Door Forum (ODF). The researchers are just beginning the project □ conducting a stakeholder outreach campaign and literature review.

Next fall, the researchers will begin the next phase of the project and start to identify ideas for designing a new system to pay for therapy in SNFs, according to the **National Association for the Support of Long Term Care** (NASL).

You can get more information by visiting the project's webpage at www.cms.gov/Medicare/Medicare-Fee-for-Service-Payment/SNFPPS/therapyresearch.html. If you want to submit your comments or suggestions, you can email them to SNFTherapyPayments@cms.hhs.gov.

CMS Launches 'Bundled Payments for Care Improvement' Initiative

The **Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services** is testing a new payment system, and if it flies, you might be seeing a lot more financial "bundles" coming your way than in the past.

On Jan. 31, CMS announced that over 500 organizations would be participating in the Bundled Payments for Care Improvement initiative, which bundles payments for episodes of care. "The objective of this initiative is to improve the quality of health care delivery for Medicare beneficiaries, while reducing program expenditures, by aligning the financial incentives of all providers," said Acting CMS Administrator **Marilyn Tavenner** in a Jan. 31 statement.

Because payments will be bundled, physicians will have to work carefully with hospitals, post-acute facilities, and other providers. The practices that have been selected to participate in the early phase program will begin in April, and another group of providers will begin the program in 2014. There are currently four models being tested and 48 episodes (ranging from amputation to stroke) that CMS will be testing for the bundled care project.

To read more about the program, visit <http://innovation.cms.gov/initiatives/bundled-payments/>.