

OASIS Alert

Survey & Certification: Home Health ABN Clarification Creates A New Deadline

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Home health agencies can't provide care to beneficiaries under the Medicare home health benefit without a doctor's order -- and the **Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services** finally has agreed to make that clear to beneficiaries.

Background: The legally mandated home health advance beneficiary notice rules were scheduled to take effect June 1. But in a surprise last minute announcement, CMS postponed the effective date (see OASIS Alert, Vol. 7, No. 6, p. 58). The delay resulted from the deluge of public comments and the need to make some changes in response to them, a CMS official explained in the May 24 Open Door Forum for HHAs.

New development: Now the government has issued a new proposed HHABN according to a public notice published in the June 23 Federal Register. A 30-day period of public comment follows. The proposed effective date is Sept. 1. Another set of related questions and answers is also available, CMS says.

The main change is a third notice that can be used when the reduction or termination of services results from a physician's order, reports the **National Association for Home Care & Hospice**. The new proposed notice states: "By signing below, I understand that I received this notice because my doctor has changed my orders and so my home health plan is changing. This Home Health Agency has explained to me that they cannot provide home care without a doctor's order."

Note: For the latest changes and more detailed instructions on using the revised HHABN, order Eli's Home Care Week at www.elihealthcare.com or by calling 1-800-874-9180.