

Health Information Compliance Alert

Industry News: CMS Clarifies Hospice Signature Requirements

Also: Get advice from Medicare to discover differences between payment review programs.

You may be aware that stamped signatures are forbidden when documenting a hospice provider's signature -- but CMS now clarifies its stance on another confusing documentation topic -- the faxed signature.

In MLN Matters article MLN5971, with an April 28 implementation date, CMS notes that Medicare has often maintained that the only legible identifiers it accepts for services provided or ordered by hospices must be generated using a written or electronic signature. But, the article notes, CMS now allows an exception to this requirement.

"A facsimile of an original written or electronic signature is acceptable for the certification of terminal illness for hospice," the article states. "Please be sure to note, however, that while a signature facsimile is acceptable in this instance, it and hard copies of a physician's electronic signature" must remain in the patient's record.

The MLN Matters article is available at <http://www.cms.hhs.gov/MLNMattersArticles/downloads/MM5971.pdf>.