

Home Health Coding and OASIS Expert

Is it a LUPA?

When you get a referral for a patient who doesn't qualify for a full episode of care, consider whether a Low-Utilization Payment Adjustment (LUPA) is appropriate.

Why: If you keep the patient on for a full episode with no skilled need, your claim will likely wind up being denied much later on, said **Sharon Litwin**. Instead, discharge the patient while in the LUPA period, she suggested during the recent **Eli**-sponsored audioconference Building a Strong Foundation in Homecare.

According to the Palmetto GBA website, "a LUPA is made for beneficiaries who require four or fewer visits during the 60-day episode. These episodes are paid the labor adjusted, national standardized, service-specific per-visit amount multiplied by the number of discipline-specific visits actually furnished during the episode."

"A LUPA is a per-visit rate for those low-visit situations," Litwin said. In cases where you may have a reason to visit the patient for a few visits, but you don't see a need for a full episode, a LUPA may be appropriate.

Some patients may need a lower number of visits for such things as teaching the patient or caregiver to perform procedures or a condition which has stabilized quickly and does not have further skilled need. Discharging these patients during the LUPA period can prevent loss of reimbursement later on.