

Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services  
Open Door Forum: Home Health, Hospice and Durable Medical Equipment (DME)

Moderator: Jill Darling  
July 29, 2020  
2:00 pm ET

Coordinator: Welcome and thank you for standing by. For the duration of today's conference, all parties will be in listen-only mode until the question-and-answer session of the conference. At that time, you may press star 1 on your phone to ask a question. I would like to inform all parties at today's conference is being recorded. If you have any objections, you may disconnect at this time. I would now like to hand the conference over to Ms. Jill Darling. Thank you. You may begin.

Jill Darling: Great. Thank you, (Tara). Good morning and good afternoon everyone. Thanks for joining us for our first Home Health, Hospice and DME Open Door Forum during the quarantine. So we really appreciate you joining us. As (Tara) said, I'm Jill Darling in the CMS Office of Communication.

And some kind of updates just as far as how today's call will go since everyone -- all the speakers -- are working virtually, we don't have that face-to-face interaction in our conference room because you know when we go through the Q&A portion to talk internally. So if you have a question during the Q&A portion and they're silent, don't be alarmed. There might be some quick email kind going on. And if we're unable to answer your question today, please always feel free to send an email into the Home Health, Hospice and DME Open Door Forum mailbox which is listed on the agenda.

So we welcome you again. And before we get into today's agenda, I have my brief announcements. This open door forum is open to everyone but if you are a member of the press you may listen in but please refrain from asking

questions during the Q&A portion of the call. If you do have any inquiries, please contact CMS at [press@cms.hhs.gov](mailto:press@cms.hhs.gov).

And I'll hand the call off to our chair, Brian Slater.

Brian Slater: Thanks, Jill. This is Brian Slater. I'm the Deputy Director in the Division of Home Health and Hospice. And a couple updates but first before I get to the one update that I have and get to our agenda, I just want to thank everyone out there, that you know, we're in extreme uncharted territory right now and all of us at CMS appreciate all the efforts that all the providers and everyone out there are doing to help get us through this public health emergency. So thank you from all of us first and foremost.

And then secondly in regards to the home health rule that went out I guess in June, the comment period for that there was a correction that was posted in the Federal Register. So the correction is changing that date from August 31 to August 24. Show all comments on the home health proposed rule have to be into our system by August 24 to be considered for the final rule. So that was published in a Federal Register notice. It is 85 FR 43805. And the change is just a date counting issue. It's still the process to be 60 days from the date of display. And the 60 days from the date of display is August 24 and not August 31. So I just wanted to have that clarification out there in case people hadn't heard that changed or seen the Federal Register notice.

And with that, I will pass it back to Jill to start getting into our agenda.  
Thanks, Jill.

Jill Darling: Sure. Thanks, Brian. First, we have (Emily Calvert) who has an update on the (DMEPOS) prior authorization.

(Emily Calvert): Hi. Thank you, Jill. Good afternoon everyone. This is (Emily Calvert) from the Center for Program Integrity. I will be giving an update on the required prior authorization list for DMEPOS prior authorization.

So as a result of the COVID-19 public health emergency, CMS had implemented certain flexibilities related to prior authorization for DMEPOS items. Given the importance of prior authorization to CMS' program integrity efforts, CMS will resume full operations of the prior authorization process beginning on August 3rd, 2020 for all power mobility devices and pressure reducing support services on the required prior authorization list.

Additionally, CMS has revised implementation dates for prior authorization of the 6 lower limb prosthetic codes that were postponed as a result of the COVID-19 public health emergency. The 6 selected lower limb prosthetic codes are L5856, L5857, L5858, L5973, L7980, and L5987. Prior authorization of these codes has been rescheduled to begin in the states of California, Michigan, Pennsylvania, and Texas for dates of service after September 1, 2020. Suppliers may begin requesting prior authorization from the DME MACs on August 18.

Implementation of required prior authorization will expand nationwide to all US states and territories for these codes beginning December 1, 2020. The updated required prior authorization list and additional operational guidance can be found in the download section of the CMS DMEPOS prior authorization Web site. That Web site is [go.cms.gov/dmepospa](https://go.cms.gov/dmepospa). And additionally, questions and comments related to the DMEPOS prior authorization program can be sent to the DMEPOS mailbox. The email address for that is [dmepospa@cms.hhs.gov](mailto:dmepospa@cms.hhs.gov).

I will now turn the call over to (Cindy) for an update on the Hospice Quality

Reporting Program. Thank you.

(Joan Procter): Hi, (Emily). Thank you. This is actually (Joan Procter) filling in for (Cindy) today. I'm going to provide you with some updates relative to the Hospice Quality Reporting Program. We recently posted a tip sheet on the hospice QRP in the COVID-19 public health emergency and this Tip Sheet provides practical guidance on hospital quality data submissions starting on July 1 of 2020. The temporary Hospice Quality Reporting Program exemptions due to the COVID public health emergency ended on June 30, 2020.

As of July 1, 2020 hospices are now expected to resume timely quality data collection submission of (CAHPS) hospice survey and (HIS) records. The (CAHPS) hospice survey started July 1 with July dev. (HIS) also started July 1 with all-new (HIS) admission records and (HIS) discharge records that occur on or after July 1, 2020.

The calendar year 2020 data used for meeting the hospice quality reporting program requirements includes July 1 through December 31 of 2020. As quarter one and quarter two of 2020 -- which was January 1 through June 30 -- were exempted due to the COVID-19 public health emergency. This means that even if you submit (HIS) in (CAHPS) hospice survey for quarter one and quarter two of 2020, we will not include any of that data for purposes of calculating whether you meet our reporting program requirements impacting your fiscal year 2020 payments. For more information, please visit the Hospice Quality Reporting Program requirements and best practices page and download the Tip Sheet.

We also want to highlight for you some things that were announced in our quarter two quarter and three newsletters. We have updated a fact sheet on timeliness compliance for (HIS) submissions on the HIS web page. This fact

sheet summarizes the timeliness compliance threshold requirements by reporting year. As a reminder since fiscal year 2020, at least 90% of all required hospice items that are HIS records must be submitted and accepted within a 30-day submission deadline.

Formerly hospice consumer assessment of healthcare provider and systems or CAHPS data must be submitted and accepted by the quarterly deadlines by a CMS-approved third party vendor. Please see our updated fact sheet for more information. You can also find materials in our newsletter in regards to the HIS submission requirements for download on the education and training library web page. The webinar covers topics such as HIS and CAHPS submission requirements, modifications, and activation.

Finally, I would like to highlight an upcoming web-based training that we encourage you to review and share. The training will help you and your staff understand and navigate the many available hospice quality reporting program training resources by topic and category. For more information about this training please look for upcoming announcements on the spotlight and announcements page of the Hospice Quality Reporting Web site.

I also have an update on the (HOPE). We have several updates actually related to the ongoing development of the standardized hospice patient assessment, the hospice outcomes and patient evaluation or HOPE. In June, we released the spring hospice quality reporting program forum as an on-demand recording allowing hospices to learn about HOPE development and testing. You can download this recording from the HOPE web page of the Hospice Quality Reporting Web site.

There are four stages of HOPE testing -- cognitive, pilot, alpha, and beta testing. We are pleased to announce that the HOPE pilot testing phase is

complete. In the pilot test, four hospices evaluated the draft assessment and field test procedures. These four hospices were Fair Hope Hospice and Palliative Care, Treasure Valley Hospice, Valley Hospice, and Grace Hospice Care. CMS is very grateful to these hospitals for their commitment and participation.

Field testing the new patient assessment instrument is not possible without the support and participation of hospice providers play a critical role in the development and validation of the HOPE assessment. After the public call for hospices to participate in alpha testing, we started contacting providers to participate in the next phase of testing -- the HOPE alpha test. After associates of CMS contractor for HOPE developing testing will train participating hospices to complete the HOPE in the hospice team will field the HOPE with their patients beginning this fall.

I've also been asked to announce that on Wednesday, August 5th from 1:00 to 2:00. CMS will be hosting a webinar for Medicare-certified hospice providers and other hospice stakeholders to present a plain state composite quality measure concept that CMS is considering, including in the hospice quality reporting program. During this webinar, CMS subject matter expert and measure developer will discuss the new composite quality measure concept, the hospice care index, and will give the audience an opportunity to share ideas and discuss the concept. And if you look on our Web site, our Hospice Quality Reporting Web site, there is a link for being able to register. It's also listed in our agenda I believe.

Also, I was asked to provide for you an update on our future (CAP) report which is our technical evaluation panel report that we plan to release in August of 2020. In November 2019 (AFT) associates held the first in-person meeting of the technical expert panel or TEP to support hospice quality

reporting program quality measure development efforts. The TEP included 11 participants representing a wide range of hospice stakeholders including providers, caregivers, and quality improvement experts. The goal of the TEP is to provide input on the HOPE assessment instrument and corresponding quality measures for hospice care. A report documenting the proceedings of the November TEP will be released on the hospice quality reporting Web site in August of 2020.

Also, I wanted to remind folks about the reconsideration for the calendar year 2019 hospice quality data impacting which will end at the fiscal year 2021 payment. On or about July 13th CMS sent official notification to providers identified as non-compliant with Hospice Quality Reporting Program requirements. Those providers have received letters from their (MAC) and in their password folders. The letters include instructions for submitting a reconsideration request by August 18th of 2020.

Hospices that are not compliant for (APU) will not - who are compliant, I apologize, for APU will not receive the certification. If you have not already done so, we encourage all hospices to check for a notification letter of non-compliance from your MAC and within your (CAP) folder.

For hospices submitting a reconsideration request, note that reconsiderations that contain PHI -- protected health information -- will not be processed. Please remember to remove all PHI prior to submitting your reconsideration. For more information, please review the reconsideration web page.

I also have an update on the (heart) tools. On July 22, 2020 the latest version of the heart was released. And if you look at our health information survey technical web page on your Hospice Quality Reporting Program Web site, you will be able to locate the heart software latest version.

Also, if anyone - I know that you guys are always interested in signing up for informational emails. So in addition to the listserv that providers should sign up for so that they can stay current with the Hospice Quality Reporting Program, we also have Swingtech which is a CMS contractor that sends informational messages to hospices related to the Quality Reporting Program on a quarterly basis.

Their latest outreach communication can be found on the Hospice Quality Reporting Program requirements and best practices page. If you want to receive Swingtech's quarterly emails then add or update the email address to which these messages are sent by sending an email to [QRPhhealth@screenemp.com](mailto:QRPhhealth@screenemp.com). Be sure to include your facility name and your CMS Certification Number CCN along with any requested updates.

And after that lengthy update, I'm going to turn this over to (Charles Padgett) for an update on public reporting. (Charles)?

(Charles Padgett): Thank you, (Joan). I really appreciate it. Good afternoon, good morning everyone. My name is (Charles Padgett) and I do the Hospice Quality Reporting Program public reporting work here at CMS. I want to share several updates on public reporting. The first of which is related to the April 2020 hospice compare refresh. And we want to let you know that that included updates for information on the states on the public use file or PUF as we call it which now reflects data from 2015 through 2017. And we have changes to the format as well as the changes to tech descriptions on the site.

Also, the August 2020 hospice compare refresh is coming up here very soon. And we just want to let you know we will be sending out announcements when the refresh occurs.

Moving on to the November refresh of hospice compare, provide preview reports for the November 2020 hospice compare refresh will be available coming up in September. As always, providers will have 30 days to review their HIS and CAHPS results, and additional details, as well as notices regarding the release of those preview reports, will be coming up here in the near future.

Lastly, I wanted to just talk about the quarter one and quarter two 2020 data and public reporting. So due to the COVID-19 public health emergency -- as (Joan) mentioned earlier -- CMS made the decision not to publicly report quarter one and quarter two 2020 quality data. Data for these quarters was frozen. I want to let you know to keep your eye out for a Tip Sheet that will be released in September which will provide practical and useful information about public reporting in light of the need to freeze the quarter one and quarter two quality data. We will announce this and post it on the Hospice Quality Reporting Program Spotlight page in September. So that's coming up there and should have a lot of useful information regarding how we'll be handling that data.

And that's all I have, (Joan). Thank you.

(Jill Darling): All right. Thank you, (Charles). Next, we have (Debra Dean-Whittaker) who has some updates on the hospice CAHPS.

(Debra Dean-Whittaker): Yes, thank you very much. I have a few reminders for hospices relating to the CAHPS Hospice Survey. As mentioned previously, required reporting survey restarted on July 1st, 2020. This means you do need to report your July debt to your vendor as normal so that survey administration can occur.

I also wanted to let you know the next CAHPS Hospice Survey data submission deadline is the second Wednesday in August. That is August 12, 2020. Please note the data that normally would be doing all this is the quarter one 2020, which has been exempted from reporting due to COVID-19. Many hospices may not have data to submit. That's fine. Hospices are exempted from reporting quarter one 2020 data.

However, some hospices have continued to participate in the CAHPS Hospice Survey through the exempted period. If you have quarter one 2020 data that you want to submit, your vendor should submit that data by August 12, 2020. Please be sure to monitor your data submission reports so you know whether your vendor has successfully submitted data for you.

On a different topic, if you are thinking about switching vendors, please contact the hospice technical assistance team. Switching vendors can be a tricky process and the team can help you navigate it successfully.

Also, please remember the request for an exemption for (FOD) can still be made using the form currently on the CAHPS Hospice Survey Web site. The URL is on the agenda here. At choose participation exemption four sides from the menu FOF. This form will be available until December 31, 2020 but we recommend you do it as soon as you can so you don't forget it.

If you need help or you have concerns, please contact our technical assistance team. Their email and phone number is on the agenda.

Thank you and we are now going to change topics so I will reintroduce my colleague (Joan Procter).

(Joan Procter): Hi. Thanks (Debra). Hoping no one's going to get sick of hearing my voice. I'll try to be brief here. We'll begin with an announcement similar to what we just did with hospice about a COVID-19 tip sheet for the Home Health Quality Reporting Program. This tip sheet provides practical guidance for home health quality data submission. The temporary exception for home health quality reporting requirements ended on June 30, 2020 and effective July 1, 2020 HHS home health agencies are expected and were expected to resume timely quality data collection and submission of (OASIS) and CAHPS Home Health Survey data.

Specifically, Home Health agencies are expected to resume quality data collection submission of CAHPS Home Health Survey data and must be submitted for the CAHPS the Home Health Survey must be submitted on July 16, 2020, and onward. HHAs are reminded all Oasis assessment time points within 90 days of July 1, 2020 or later shall be submitted.

To download the tip sheet, please visit the Home Health Quality Reporting Program web page.

Then I also have two announcements about OASIS. First, implementation of OASIS E will be delayed for the interim final rule that was issued a while back. Implementation will take place the 1st January that is one full calendar year after following the end of the current public health emergency. For example, if the public health emergency ends in October of 2020, we will implement Oasis E beginning January 1, 2022. If the public health emergency ends in February of 2021, we will implement it began in January 1 of 2023.

Second, there is a new video tutorial regarding section (GG) of the Oasis is available on our Home Health Quality Reporting program training Web site. The videos that are on there for GG will assist with coding specific GG

section GG items.

Also, I have a couple of public reporting announcements. As we posted on our Web site recently, there will not be a July 2020 refresh for the home health compare site. CMS will not release a home health provider preview report for the July 2020 refresh. The publicly reported home health data published for April 2020 will remain in place until the October 2020 refresh, which is the next scheduled refresh.

For the October 2020 refresh, home health providers receive their provider preview report in July 2020. In these reports, you'll see a few measure changes reflecting finalized rule changes -- specifically, a new Skin integrity measure will be reported for the first time. And the previous pressure also measure will be removed.

Next, we would like to provide an update on how to view the report in iQIES. Your preview reports as well as your tally and agency level (QN) report and review and correct reports are available in IQIES. You can find both reports by selecting my reports in iQIES. If you need assistance in accessing your reports, please contact the help desk at [iQIES@cms.hhs.gov](mailto:iQIES@cms.hhs.gov).

We also implemented a change in public reporting for the April refresh of home health compare. In accordance with the calendar year 2020 final rule, we have removed the improvement in pain quality measures. We are not using it to calculate the quality of patient care star rating.

I have two updates for you on our quality assessment only methodology. You can access your quarter three (QAO) reports in iQIES. The quarter three (QAO) reports were delayed due to a data issue that has now been resolved.

Also, we have updated the (QAO) data submission deadline for 2020 based upon the delay in delivery. To view the updated deadlines, please visit the Home Health Quality Reporting data submission deadlines page on the Home Health Quality Reporting Web site. In reference to the rule that Brian Slater was discussed earlier, we want to remind our providers that the Home Health Quality Reporting program did not have any proposals in this year's calendar year 20-21 home health prospective payment system proposed rule. So I have new updates relative to that.

I believe I'm now going to turn it back to (Debra) who's going to provide some information on CAHPS. (Debra)?

(Debra Dean-Whittaker): Thank you, (Joan). I'm filling in for (Lori Teichman). Home health agencies are responsible for giving their monthly list of home health patients to their survey vendors. Be sure you do this time. If you do not have any patients for the month, you must notify your vendor. That way your vendor can tell us at CMS. If you do not notify your vendor, we will assume that you did not participate in HH CAHPS that month. This can affect your annual payment update.

Home health agencies should monitor their HH CAHPS data submission reports. Check your data submission reports. They are in the HHA portal on the HH CAHPS Web site. You need to do this so that you can confirm your data is in. The HH CAHPS data warehouse. Your data must be successfully submitted to the warehouse in order to count as participating in the HH CAHPS survey.

If you HHA has recently switched vendors, please contact our contractor RTI by emailing [HHCAHPS@rti.org](mailto:HHCAHPS@rti.org) to be sure that your most current vendor is

authorized to submit your HH CAHPS data for you. You risk missing a data submission deadline if the wrong vendor is authorized. For all questions about the HH CAHPS survey, please email us. Our email addresses are on the agenda and we certainly welcome your feedback about HHCAHPS.

And now I'm going to switch everything over to (Jennifer McMullen).

(Jennifer McMullen): Thank you. Hello. This is (Jennifer McMullen). I want to give an update on the review choice demonstration for Home Health Services. We will be ending the pause for the demonstration beginning on August 3, 2020. The initial selection period for North Carolina and Florida will begin on August 3, 2020 and end on August 17, 2020. The choice selection period for Ohio's second review cycle will also begin on August 3rd, 2020 and end on August 17th, 2020.

Following those selection periods, home health claims and all demonstration states Illinois, Ohio, Texas, North Carolina, in Florida with billing periods beginning on or after August 31 (unintelligible) August 31, 2020, will be subject to review under the requirements of the choice that was selected. Following the resumption of the demonstration, the (MAC) will conduct a post-payment review on claims subject to a demonstration that was submitted and paid during the pause. We will be posting more information on that process in the near future.

More information can be found on our CMS demonstration Web site at <https://go.cms.gov/homehealthrcd>. Thank you. I'll now turn it back over to Jill.

Jill Darling: Thank you (Jennifer) and thank you to all of our speakers today. (Tara) will open the lines for Q&A, please.

Coordinator: Thank you. We will now begin the question and answer session. If you would like to ask a question, please press Star 1 and record your name clearly. Your name is needed in order to introduce your question. If you choose to withdraw your question, please press Star 2. Again, to ask a question, please press Star 1. It will take a few moments for questions to come through. Please stand by. The first question comes from (Sheila Clark). Your line is open. (Sheila Clark, you line, please check your mute button. proceeding to the next question. (Stephanie Fixton), your line is open.

(Stephanie Fixton): Good afternoon. I just had a clarification question. I heard pretty clearly that for some health agencies, quarter 1 and quarter 2 2020 is exempt from the Quality Reporting Program. Will not be publically reported but you may submit data to CMS. I wanted to get clarification that those same, the same is for home health agencies? That they're exempt from the Quality Reporting Program for quarter 1 and quarter 2 of this year. That quarter 1 and quarter 2 will not publically reported but that you may submit your data to CMS. Thank you.

(Debra Dean): (Stephanie), this is (Debra Dean), examiner for hospice. Did you mean to ask that which you said to this office?

(Stephanie Fixton): No. You made it, I think, (Charles), Mr. (Padgett), made it quite clear that quarter 1 and quarter 2 data will not be publically reported. I'm also trying to find out if that's the same for, the intent is the same, for home health caps?

(Charles Padgett): Yes, this is (Charles) and that is correct. We will not use quarter 1 or quarter 2 2020 data for the purposes of publically reporting, either for hospice or the home health program.

(Stephanie Fixton): Thank you so much for that clarification.

(Charles Padgett): Oh, of course.

Coordinator: As a reminder if you would like to ask a question, please press Star 1 and record your name. There are more questions coming in. Stand by. The next question comes from (Carol Stiler). Your line is open. (Carol Stiler), please check your mute button. Proceeding to the next question. (Laurie Heff), your line is open.

(Laurie Heff): Great. I just wondered if there's an update on the final rule for hospice? Especially with regards to the discussion of implementation date for the addendum to the benefit election statement.

(Brian Slater): Hi. This is (Brian Slater). Appreciate the question. We're still working to get the hospice rule out and anything that is involved in that rule will be out when, when the rule comes out. But usually it's on or before August 1st. So, please stay tuned.

(Laurie Heff): Okay. Thank you.

Coordinator: The next question comes from (Suzanne Clark). Your line is open.

(Suzanne Clark): Hi. Yes. This is (Suzanne Clark). I have another question about the quarter 1, quarter 2 data not being publically reported for home health. So, are we saying that that data will be used in the Star Rating Report?

(Charles Padgett): Hi. This is (Charles Padgett). So, my understanding is that any, any confidential reports that are only acceptable to providers may show that data. No, no data that is publically posted we'll use quarter 1 or quarter 2 data to be

calculated, in our calculation of quality metrics.

(Suzanne Clark): So, then when you come out with, I have a preview report in front of me, for October, and that's using the data through 2019. So, when the preview report comes out for January, is that all going to use the same time period? Or what's this, I'm confused about the timeframe with our Star Rating Reports, particularly for quarter 1 and quarter 2.

(Charles Padgett): Yes. So, we'll exclude them from the data. How we will go about recording the data after considering those exclusions. That information will be forthcoming. So, you will expect to see some communications from CMS in the near future regarding exactly how we'll be handling the data and the specific, compare site refreshes, with respect to each of these programs.

(Suzanne Clark): Okay. So, my concern was how much data is in the report? Usually would be an annual, a year's worth of data in Star Rating Report and just skipping two quarters, you know, how would that be. So, we'll look for that information. Thank you.

(Charles Padgett): Fantastic question and we're definitely thinking that through and that information will certainly be forthcoming (unintelligible).

(Suzanne Clark): Okay. Thank you.

Coordinator: As a reminder if you would like to ask a question, please press Star 1 and record your name. The next question comes from (Kelly Prisnicki). Your line is now open.

(Kelly Prisnicki): Hi. I just wanted to clarify. I understand the review choice demonstration is resuming August. Does that mean the target of COVID education audits

will be reviewed then as well?

(Jennifer): This is (Jennifer). Unfortunately, I can't speak to that, I can only talk about the review choice demonstrations.

(Kelly Prisnicki): Thank you.

Coordinator: As a reminder if you would like to ask a question, please press Star 1 on your phone and record your name. The next question comes from (Kathy Carlson). One moment. (Kathy Carlson), your line is open.

(Kathy Carlson): Hi. I'm going to be asking another question about the data, publically reported, just to get further clarification. Understanding that during this suspension quarters, that that data will not ever be publically reported. However, it has not really been clearly articulated that the old storage will stay up for three additional quarters when new data is lacking or how this will be handled. And Mr. (Padgett), what I take as an answer to that question is that information, will be forthcoming, and still has yet to be determined?

(Charles Padgett): Yes. It will be forthcoming. It's not really yet to be determined but yes, it will make that information publically. We're, we're dropping a communication right now and we expect to get you that information in the very near future. We will outline how each of the refreshers subsequent to this fall refresh will be handled as quarter 1 and quarter 2 will for each of the performance for our quality metrics. And that will be outlined and will be clear within this communication.

(Kathy Carlson): Thank you.

(Charles Padgett): Yes. You bet.

Coordinator: Again as a reminder if you would like to ask a question, please press Star 1 on your phone and record your name. One moment. We show no further questions at this time.

Jill Darling: Well, thanks everyone for joining today's call. I'll hand it off to (Brian) for closing remarks.

(Brian Slater): I don't think I have anything. Stay safe stay healthy everyone and if you have any follow-up questions that, you know, didn't come to you during this call but did afterwards you can email the ODF Mailbox. And we'll triage them and try to get an answer back to you as quickly as possible. Thanks for joining everyone. Appreciate it.

Coordinator: That does conclude today's conference. Thank you for participating. You may disconnect at this time. Speakers, please allow a moment of silence and stand by for your post-conference.

END