

U.S. House and Senate Notification
Monday, November 16, 2009

To: Congressional Health Staff

From: Amy Hall
Director, Office of Legislation
Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services

Subject: HHS Releases Recovery Act Funding to Survey Ambulatory Surgical Centers

Last week, the HHS Secretary announced the availability of up to \$9 million in funding from the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) for state survey agencies targeted at reducing healthcare-associated infections (HAIs) in ambulatory surgical centers (ASCs). Surveyors in 43 states will survey approximately 1,300 ASCs across the nation during the next 12 months and will use a new CMS survey process that uses an infection control tool developed in conjunction with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. In several ASC-related communicable disease outbreaks, failure to employ very basic infection control practices were implicated, leading CMS to identify this as an area for additional oversight. Across the United States, health care services are being shifted to outpatient settings such as ambulatory care facilities and free-standing specialty care sites. The number of ASCs participating in Medicare grew from about 3600 in 2002 to 5200 in early 2009, a 44 percent increase.

In addition to the funds being made available for the inspection of ASCs, the CDC has also made \$40 million available to state public health departments to create or expand state-based HAI prevention and surveillance efforts, and strengthen the public health workforce trained to prevent HAIs.

The press release regarding this announcement is available using the following link:
<http://www.hhs.gov/news/press/2009pres/11/20091110a.html>

If you have any questions regarding this announcement, please contact the CMS Office of Legislation. Thank you.