



# MLN Matters®



Information for Medicare Fee-For-Service Health Care Professionals

Related Change Request (CR) #: N/A

MLN Matters Number: SE0439

Effective Date: N/A

Implementation Date: N/A

## *Skilled Nursing Facility Consolidated Billing as It Relates to Clinical Social Workers*

**Note:** This article was updated on May 9, 2013, to reflect current Web addresses. All other information remains unchanged..

### Provider Types Affected

Skilled Nursing Facilities (SNFs), physicians, practitioners, and clinical social workers (CSWs)

### Provider Action Needed

This Special Edition is an informational article that describes SNF Consolidated Billing (CB) as it applies to CSW services furnished to SNF residents during a Part A covered stay.

**Clarification:** The SNF CB requirement makes the SNF itself responsible for including on the Part A bill that it submits to its Medicare intermediary almost all of the services that a resident receives during the course of a Medicare-covered stay, except for a small number of services that are specifically excluded from this provision. These “excluded” services can be separately furnished to the resident and billed under Medicare Part B by a variety of outside sources. These sources can include other providers of service (such as hospitals), which would submit the bill for Part B services to their Medicare intermediary, as well as practitioners and suppliers who would generally submit their bills to a Medicare Part B carrier. (Bills for certain types of items or equipment would be submitted by the supplier to their Medicare Durable Medical Equipment Regional Carrier (DMERC).)

### Background

When the SNF Prospective Payment System (PPS) was introduced in 1998, it changed not only the way SNFs are paid, but also the way SNFs must work with suppliers, physicians, and other practitioners. CB assigns SNFs the Medicare billing responsibility for virtually all of the services that the SNF’s residents receive during the course of a covered Part A stay.

Payment for this full range of services is included in the SNF PPS global per diem rate. The only exceptions are those services that are specifically excluded from this provision, which remain separately billable to Medicare Part B by the entity that actually furnished the service. For a detailed overview of SNF CB and a list of the services excluded from SNF CB, see MLN Matters Special Edition SE0431 at

<http://www.cms.gov/outreach-and-education/medicare-learning-network-mln/mlnmattersarticles/downloads/SE0431.pdf> on the CMS website.

#### Disclaimer

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Since CSW services do not currently appear on this excluded list, they are included within the overall package of services that is subject to the SNF CB requirement. Although the inclusion of CSW services under the SNF CB requirement does not preclude Medicare coverage for these services, it makes the SNF responsible for including them in its Part A bill for the resident's covered stay. In fact, bundling CSW services in the Part A payment rate is not a new concept. The corresponding Medicare comprehensive billing requirement for inpatient hospital services, which similarly includes CSW services while excluding the services of certain other types of mental health professionals, has been in effect since 1983, and served as a model for SNF CB.

### Additional Information

See MLN Matters Special Edition SE0431 for a detailed overview of SNF CB. This article lists services excluded from SNF CB and can be found at <http://www.cms.gov/outreach-and-education/medicare-learning-network-mln/mlnmattersarticles/downloads/SE0431.pdf> on the CMS website.

Also, the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) MLN Consolidated Billing web site can be found at <http://www.cms.gov/Medicare/Medicare-Fee-for-Service-Payment/SNFPPS/index.html> on the CMS website.

It includes the following relevant information:

- General SNF CB information;
- HCPCS codes that can be separately paid by the Medicare carrier (i.e., services not included in CB);
- Therapy codes that must be consolidated in a non-covered stay; and
- All code lists that are subject to quarterly and annual updates and should be reviewed periodically for the latest revisions.

The SNF PPS Consolidated Billing website can be found at <http://www.cms.gov/Medicare/Medicare-Fee-for-Service-Payment/SNFPPS/index.html> on the CMS website.

It includes the following relevant information:

- Background;
- Historical questions and answers;
- Links to related articles; and
- Links to publications (including transmittals and Federal Register notices).

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