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Official CMS news from the Medicare Learning Network®

SPECIAL EDITION

Friday, June 26, 2020

News

- COVID-19: SNF Benefit Period Waiver
- HHAs: Proposed Payment and Policy Changes and Home Infusion Therapy Benefit for CY 2021
- CMS Announces Plans to End the Blanket Waiver Requiring Nursing Homes to Submit Staffing Data

News

COVID-19: SNF Benefit Period Waiver

Disruptions during a Public Health Emergency can affect the Skilled Nursing Facility (SNF) benefit:

- Prevent a beneficiary from having the Qualifying Hospital Stay (QHS)
- Disrupt the process of ending the beneficiary's current benefit period and renewing their benefits

[Emergency waivers](#) of QHS and benefit period requirements under §1812(f) of the Social Security Act help restore SNF coverage that beneficiaries affected by the emergency would be entitled to under normal circumstances.

Learn more about the waiver and how to bill in [MLN Matters Article SE20011](#).

HHAs: Proposed Payment and Policy Changes and Home Infusion Therapy Benefit for CY 2021

On June 25, CMS issued a proposed rule [CMS-1730-P] for FY 2021 that updates the Medicare payment rates for Home Health Agencies (HHAs). This proposed rule also includes a proposal to make permanent the regulatory changes related to telecommunications technologies in providing care under the Medicare home health benefit beyond the expiration of the Public Health Emergency for the COVID-19 pandemic.

For More Information:

- [Fact Sheet](#)
- [Proposed Rule](#)

CMS Announces Plans to End the Blanket Waiver Requiring Nursing Homes to Submit Staffing Data

On June 25, CMS announced plans to end the emergency blanket waiver requiring all nursing homes to resume submitting staffing data through the Payroll-Based Journal (PBJ) system by August 14, 2020. The PBJ system allows CMS to collect nursing home staffing information which impacts the quality of care residents receive. The blanket waiver was intended to temporarily allow the agency to concentrate efforts on combating COVID-19 and reduce administrative burden on nursing homes so they could focus on patient health and safety during this Public Health Emergency.

The memorandum also provides updates related to staffing and quality measures used on the Nursing Home Compare website and the Five Star Rating System.

To view the memorandum to states and nursing home stakeholders, visit:

<https://www.cms.gov/medicareprovider-enrollment-and-certificationsurvey/certificationgeninfo/policy-and-memos-states-and/changes-staffing-information-and-quality-measures-posted-nursing-home-compare-website-and-five-star>.

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