

Medicare hospice policy issues

ISSUE: The Commission made recommendations in March 2009 to improve the hospice payment system, increase accountability in the benefit, and improve data collection. In the intervening years, several steps have been taken to increase accountability and data collection via PPACA and CMS administrative actions, while additional steps are pending. In addition, PPACA gave CMS the authority to revise the hospice payment system as the Secretary determines appropriate no earlier than fiscal year 2014. No regulatory action has been taken to date on payment reform.

KEY POINTS: In this analysis, we continue our research focused on hospice policy improvements. We conduct additional analyses to support payment reform and enhanced accountability consistent with the Commission's recommendations. We also examine other issues identified by the Commission as potential areas of interest or concern, including payment for hospice in nursing homes and patients discharged alive by hospice.

ACTION: Commissioners should discuss issues raised by this research and provide feedback on specific issues they would like staff to pursue further.

STAFF CONTACT: Kim Neuman and Sara Sadownik (202-220-3700).