

U.S. House and Senate Notification
Wednesday, May 11, 2011

To: Congressional Health Staff

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

Re: HHS Offers New Tools to Help States Lower Medicaid Costs, Provide Better Care to Medicare-Medicaid Beneficiaries, and More Effectively Integrate the Benefits Under Both Programs

Today the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) announced a number of initiatives aimed at working with States to save money and better coordinate care for the 9 million Medicare-Medicaid beneficiaries. The new initiatives include better access to Medicare data and better coordination of health care between Medicare and Medicaid. The initiatives will be led by the new Federal Coordinated Health Care Office (the Medicare-Medicaid Coordination Office) which was created by the Affordable Care Act to help integrate these two programs to improve patient care and lower costs.

The Medicare-Medicaid Coordination Office today launched the Alignment Initiative, an effort to more effectively integrate benefits under the two programs. Currently low-income seniors and people with disabilities must navigate both the Medicaid and Medicare programs. This can lead to fragmented care and coverage gaps that could result in patients losing access to the treatments and equipment that help them live at home or in the community. The first step in this new Alignment Initiative is to publish a Notice for Public Comment in the Federal Register. This Notice is specifically seeking input on how to align the programs in the following six areas: care coordination, fee-for-service benefits, prescription drugs, cost sharing, enrollment, and appeals. Better alignment in these areas can reduce costs by improving health outcomes and making care coordination more efficient.

The Alignment Initiative Notice for Comment can be viewed at www.ofr.gov/inspection.aspx. The Notice will publish in the May 16th Federal Register, where it will be available at <http://www.gpoaccess.gov/fr/>. A press release will be available at: <http://www.hhs.gov/news/>

Additionally, today HHS also announced a new process to provide timely State access to Medicare data to support care coordination for individuals eligible for both Medicare and Medicaid. Access to Medicare data is an essential tool for States seeking to coordinate care, improve quality, and control costs for their highest cost beneficiaries. With this Medicare data, States will be able to identify high risk and high cost individuals, determine their primary health risks, and provide comprehensive individual client profiles to its care management contractor to tailor the most appropriate interventions.

The announcement of the new policy on State Medicare data for enrollees in Medicare and Medicaid will be published in a Center for Medicaid, CHIP and Survey & Certification (CMCS) Informational

Bulletin today. The Bulletin will be available at:
www.cms.gov/CMCSBulletins/CMCSB/list.asp#TopOfPage

Finally, a new CMS fact sheet about people enrolled in Medicare and Medicaid is attached.

If you have questions about this notification, please contact the CMS Office of Legislation at 202-690-8220. Thank you.