



IN TOUCH

A PUBLICATION OF HOSPICE OF THE VALLEY FOR THE MEDICAL COMMUNITY

WINTER 2011

Medicare requirement starts for face-to-face visits

In accordance with a new Medicare guideline, hospice patients must have a face-to-face visit from a hospice physician or nurse practitioner prior to recertification of their eligibility at 180 days. This is the first time Medicare has specified that hospice patients be examined by hospice physicians. Hospice of the Valley has long had its own policy that patients be seen by a medical director within 14 days of admission as an administrative oversight.

The agency will add resources to fulfill the requirement for examinations prior to 180-day recertification and for each 60-day recertification period after that date.

The average length of stay for a Hospice of the Valley patient is 93 days. The median length of stay is 16 days.

Community doctors who serve as the following/attending physician for their patients in hospice care aren't affected by the new regulation. They will continue in the same role. If Hospice of the Valley medical directors detect an issue with a patient during a recertification exam, they will notify the patient's following physician.

"This is a positive development for patients, families and physicians," said David Butler, MD, executive medical director of Hospice of the Valley. "It provides another set of eyes and ears on the patient."



David Butler, MD, executive medical director

The face-to-face encounter rule was among recommendations made by the Medicare Payment and Advisory Commission in an effort to ensure wise use of federal dollars for longer lengths of stay for hospice patients.

Hospices are not given additional reimbursement for the recertification visits unless there is a resulting change in the patient's plan of care. Hospice of the Valley anticipates an additional 8,000 physician/nurse practitioner visits next year as a result of the regulation.

Hospice of the Valley Inpatient Hospice Homes

Central

Coronado Home

340 E. Coronado Rd.
Phoenix, AZ 85004

Brighton Gardens

6001 E. Thomas Rd.
Scottsdale, AZ 85251

Gardiner Home

1522 W. Myrtle Ave.
Phoenix, AZ 85021

Ryan House

110 W. Merrell St., 2nd Fl.
Phoenix, AZ 85013

Maricopa PCU

2619 E. Pierce St.
Phoenix, AZ 85008

East Valley

Arbor Home

6063 E. Arbor Ave., Bldg. B
Mesa, AZ 85206

Dobson Home

1188 N. Dobson Rd.
Chandler, AZ 85224

East Mesa PCU

6063 E. Arbor Ave., Bldg. C
Mesa, AZ 85206

Friendship Village PCU

2525 E. Southern Ave.
Tempe, AZ 85282

Lund Home

1982 E. Woodside Ct.
Gilbert, AZ 85297

Northeast Valley

Eckstein Center

9494 E. Becker Ln.
Scottsdale, AZ 85260

Sherman Home

5801 E. Mayo Blvd.
Phoenix, AZ 85054

West Valley

Palm Valley PCU

13575 W. McDowell Rd.
Goodyear, AZ 85338

North Sun City PCU

17225 Boswell Blvd.
Sun City, AZ 85373

Sun City PCU

10323 W. Olive Ave.
Peoria, AZ 85345

Surprise PCU

14066 W. Waddell Rd.
Surprise, AZ 85379

Thunderbird PCU

13620 N. 55th Ave.
Glendale, AZ 85304

Your not-for-profit hospice since 1977. Bringing comfort and dignity as life nears its end.

Please call **602.530.6900** for assistance, or visit our Web site at **hov.org**.

A not-for-profit organization

info@hov.org

hov.org

Fax 530.6901

602.530.6900

85014.5656

Phoenix, AZ

1510 E. Flower St.

HOSPICE
of the
VALLEY



NON-PROFIT ORG.
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
PHOENIX, AZ
PERMIT NO. 417