

MEMORANDUM

TO: CHHA, LTHHCP and Hospice Members

FROM: Anne Hill, Community Services Policy Analyst

DATE: June 13, 2008

SUBJECT: New CMS Guideline Regarding Signature Stamps for Home Health and Hospice

ROUTE TO: Program Administrator, CFO

ABSTRACT: Per CMS, home health agencies and hospices may not accept physicians' rubber stamp signatures for clinical record documentation.

Last year, the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) updated their Program Integrity Manual and issued the following guideline: *Medicare requires a legible identity for services provided/ordered. The method used will be hand written or an electronic signature (stamp signatures are not acceptable) to sign an order or other medical record documentation for medical review purposes.*

CMS has just issued further guidance: *Effective immediately, home health agencies and hospices may **not** accept stamped physician signatures on orders, treatments, or other documents that are a part of the patient's clinical record.*

CMS noted that a facsimile of an original written or electronic signature **is** acceptable for the certifications of terminal illness for hospice.

These changes relate to CMS' efforts to promote consistency between survey and certification policies and Medicare program integrity policies, and are part of CMS' plan to put safeguards in place to combat fraud and abuse.

To view the notice, go to the CMS Web site at:

<http://www.cms.hhs.gov/SurveyCertificationGenInfo/downloads/SCLetter08-22.pdf>.

If you have any questions or comments about this memo, please contact Anne Hill at 518-449-2707, ext. 141, or by e-mail at ahill@nyahsa.org.