

Physician Face-to-face Encounter Fact Sheet

NEW MEDICARE REQUIREMENT EFFECTIVE JANUARY 1, 2011

The Patient Protection Affordable Care Act has mandated that a physician have a face-to-face encounter (in-person visit) for Medicare home health services.

The in-person visit with the patient must be done by one of the following:

- **Community physician** who will certify the plan of home health care; **OR**
- **Hospitalist** in the hospital, as long as he/she can identify the community physician who will certify plan of home health care; **OR**
- **Non-Physician Practitioner (NPP)** such as Nurse Practitioner, Clinical Nurse Specialist or Physician's Assistant, who must document the clinical findings and provide them to the certifying physician.

The in-person visit timeframes must occur:

- **No earlier than 90-days before the admission visit** to home health services;
OR
- **Within 30-days after the admission visit** to home health services.

The narrative documentation must have:

- The **patient name**;
- The **date of the in-person visit and that the visit was related**, completely or in part, **to the medical condition for which the patient needs home health services**;
- **Clinical findings that support the medical necessity and need for Medicare-covered skilled nursing, physical therapy and/or speech therapy services**;
AND
- **Clinical findings that support the patient is homebound.**

The in-person visit documentation must be a separate and distinct section of or addendum to the physician's orders/485 and must be clearly signed and dated by the certifying physician who either performed the visit or received documentation from the NPP.

The home care agency is required by Medicare to maintain this documentation.