

Physician Face-to-face Encounter Documentation Guide

The Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) has outlined documentation requirements for the face-to-face encounter which include a narrative with key data elements. This new rule goes into effect January 1, 2011. In an effort to assist you with the required data points, we have created this tool for your immediate use. Please see Face-to-face Encounter Fact Sheet for additional details.

Scenario:

Mary Smith, an 83 year old female with a history of CHF and hypertension, has increased shortness of breath, weight gain greater than 5 lbs this week, deconditioned with increased weakness, and questionable medication compliance.

The Face-to-face Encounter Narrative must be a separate and distinct section of or addendum to the physician's orders/485 and must include the following:

- **Patient Name and Identification** (if not elsewhere on the page)
- **A certification narrative that outlines**
 - **The date of the in-person visit** with the physician or other non-physician practitioner (Nurse Practitioner, Clinical Nurse Specialist, or Physician's Assistant) **and that the visit was related (completely or in part) to the medical condition for which the patient needs home health services**
 - *Example: "Patient was seen January 1, 2011 for CHF which is the reason for home care".*
 - **The services requested** (nursing and/or physical therapy and/or speech language pathology) **are medically necessary and support the need for the requested home health services.**
 - *Example: "My clinical findings support the need for skilled nursing and physical therapy services, which are medically necessary, because the patient has gained more than 5 lbs in one week, has increased SOB, is deconditioned with increased weakness, and medication compliance is questionable."*
 - **The patient is homebound** (she requires considerable and taxing effort to leave her residence for medical reasons or religious services or infrequently or of short duration for other reasons)
 - *Example: "Based on my clinical findings this patient is homebound because shortness of breath limits ambulation."*
 - **The patient is under a physician's care and the in-person visit was conducted by the certifying physician or a NPP (nurse practitioner or physician assistant) and meets the requirements for a face to face encounter**
 - *Example: "I certify that this patient is under my care and that I, or a nurse practitioner or physician's assistant working with me, had a face-to-face encounter that meets the physician face-to-face encounter requirements."*
- **The physician's signature and the date the narrative is signed.**