CLIENT ALERTS & INSIGHTS

Nursing Home Compare Updates and Data.Medicare.gov: Transparency in Action

MAY 1, 2013

Nursing Home Compare

Nursing Home Compare offers consumers and providers an increasing amount of information about individual nursing homes across the country. The Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services ("CMS") continues to enhance the information posted on the website as part of the push for health care transparency. The website continues to be enhanced with easily maneuverable tabs identifying the types of available information.

In recent months, additional information has been added on or upgraded on the website including:

- **Ownership Information:** The facility's legal business name and the owners and managers of the Medicare/Medicaid provider. The information reported on the Medicare 855As has been imported onto the website identifying names of owners and persons or entities with control over the facility operations.
- **Star Rating Program & SFF Designation:** The 5 Star rating program has been expanded to include a designation symbol for Special Focus Facilities. As defined on the website: If a nursing home has a history of persistent poor quality of care, as indicated by the findings of state or Federal inspection teams, it can be considered a Special Focus Facility (SFF). This means that the facility is subjected to more frequent inspections, escalating penalties, and potential termination from Medicare and Medicaid. This symbol indicates a facility has been named to the SFF list.
- **Inspection Results:** Inspection results continue to list the number and scope and severity of three (3) years of Medicare and Medicaid surveys. Added to the website includes access to a full report view of the most recent survey with the actual F (health deficiency) tags available with the actual text of the citations.
- **Staffing:** Staffing information continues to be available with the facility's reported information, compared with the state average and the national average. CMS plans to access staffing information directly from electronically submitted information to avoid potential manipulation of self-reported staffing information from providers. No definite date has been announced for this additional upgrade.
- **Quality Measures:** After a period of time when quality measures were not available, Quality Measures have again returned to the website. The Quality Measure reporting includes five (5) measures for short-stay residents and thirteen (13) measures for long-stay residents. The facility Quality Measures are shown in comparison to the state average and the national average for each corresponding measure.

- **Fines and Penalties:** Each facility's three (3) year history of payment of fines and penalties has been added under the Penalties tab. This provides information on the types and amounts of sanctions that have been imposed based upon survey noncompliance.
- **Printing:** The ability to print all tabs with information for a facility with one mouse click has been added to the website. This eliminates the need to check multiple screens and print in sections. This aids consumers in obtaining information when comparing facilities.

Data.Medicare.gov

Data.Medicare.gov has been added to CMS' list of websites with public information in an open, accessible and machine-readible format. This website provides direct access to official data from CMS that is used on the Medicare Compare websites and directories. This website includes downloadable databases for Hospital Compare, Nursing Home Compare, Home Health Compare, Dialysis Facility Compare, Supplier Directory and Medicare's Helpful Contacts. The direct access to this massive amount of information is unprecedented in the health care community.

In addition to the ability to download each total dataset, the site offers the user the opportunity to access portions of the data, filter, visualize and manage the data in a variety of ways. This open access allows the public to obtain information in a variety of formats and in aggregations that can be useful for the general public and providers. The database information is identified as the most recent updates and training video access is provided on the site to allow a user to better interact with the site and obtain useful information.

As the transparency process continues in the governmental arena, consumers and providers will be able to access more information to assist in gauging the health care community quality and compliance with requirements.

Additional Information

For more information on making your compliance efforts work for your organization in a meaningful way, for help dusting off and reinvigorating your program or if you simply have health care regulatory questions, please feel free to contact Janet Feldkamp or any member of our Health Care Practice Group for a further discussion.

Cleveland

Harry Brown (216) 363-4606 or hbrown@beneschlaw.com

Greg Binford (216) 363-4617 or gbinford@beneschlaw.com

W. Clifford Mull (216) 363-4198 or cmull@beneschlaw.com

Dan O'Brien (216) 363-4691 or dobrien@beneschlaw.com

Alan Schabes (216) 363-4589 or aschabes@beneschlaw.com

Columbus

Frank Carsonie, Chair (614) 223-9361 or fcarsonie@beneschlaw.com

Janet Feldkamp (614) 223-9328 or jfeldkamp@beneschlaw.com

Kelly Skeat (614) 223-9372 or kskeat@beneschlaw.com

Marty Sweterlitsch (614) 223-9367 or msweterlitsch@beneschaw.com

White Plains

Ari Markenson (914) 682-6822 or amarkenson@beneschlaw.com

Daniel Meier (914) 682-6819 or dmeier@beneschlaw.com