

Social Security Act (“SSA”) Excerpts Related to Hospice Care

SSA § 1814(a) [Conditions and Limitations on Payment for Services]:

Except as provided in subsections (d) and (g) and in section 1876, payment for services furnished an individual may be made only to providers of services which are eligible therefor under section 1866 and only if—

(7) in the case of hospice care provided an individual—

(A)(i) in the first 90-day period—

(I) the individual’s attending physician (as defined in section 1861(dd)(3)(B)) (which for purposes of this subparagraph does not include a nurse practitioner or a physician assistant), and

(II) the medical director (or physician member of the interdisciplinary group described in section 1861(dd)(2)(B)) of the hospice program providing (or arranging for) the care,

each certify in writing, at the beginning of the period, that the individual is terminally ill (as defined in section 1861(dd)(3)(A)), and based on the physician’s or medical director’s clinical judgment regarding the normal course of the individual’s illness,

(ii) in a subsequent 90 or 60-day period, the medical director or physician described in clause (i)(II) recertifies at the beginning of the period that the individual is terminally ill based on such clinical judgment;

(B) a written plan for providing hospice care with respect to such individual has been established (before such care is provided by, or under arrangements made by, that hospice program) and is periodically reviewed by the individual’s attending physician and by the medical director (and the interdisciplinary group described in section 1861(dd)(2)(B)) of the hospice program; and

(C) such care is being or was provided pursuant to such plan of care;

(D) on and after January 1, 2011 (and, in the case of clause (ii), before the date of enactment of subparagraph (E) [*i.e.*, October 6, 2014])—

(i) (I) subject to subclause (II), a hospice physician or nurse practitioner has a face-to-face encounter with the individual to determine continued eligibility of the individual for hospice care prior to the 180th-day recertification and each subsequent recertification under subparagraph (A)(ii) and attests that such visit took place (in accordance with procedures established by the Secretary); and

(II) during the emergency period described in section 1135(g)(1)(B), a hospice physician or nurse practitioner may conduct a face-to-face encounter required

under this clause via telehealth, as determined appropriate by the Secretary;
and

(ii) in the case of hospice care provided an individual for more than 180 days by a hospice program for which the number of such cases for such program comprises more than a percent (specified by the Secretary) of the total number of such cases for all programs under this title, the hospice care provided to such individual is medically reviewed (in accordance with procedures established by the Secretary);
and

(E) on and after the date of enactment of this subparagraph [*i.e.*, October 6, 2014], in the case of hospice care provided an individual for more than 180 days by a hospice program for which the number of such cases for such program comprises more than a percent (specified by the Secretary) of the total number of all cases of individuals provided hospice care by the program under this title, the hospice care provided to such individual is medically reviewed (in accordance with procedures established by the Secretary).

SSA § 1812(d) [Scope of Benefits]:

(1) Payment under this part may be made for hospice care provided with respect to an individual only during two periods of 90 days each and an unlimited number of subsequent periods of 60 days each during the individual's lifetime and only, with respect to each such period, if the individual makes an election under this paragraph to receive hospice care under this part provided by, or under arrangements made by, a particular hospice program instead of certain other benefits under this title.

(2)(A) Except as provided in subparagraphs (B) and (C) and except in such exceptional and unusual circumstances as the Secretary may provide, if an individual makes such an election for a period with respect to a particular hospice program, the individual shall be deemed to have waived all rights to have payment made under this title with respect to—

(i) hospice care provided by another hospice program (other than under arrangements made by the particular hospice program) during the period, and

(ii) services furnished during the period that are determined (in accordance with guidelines of the Secretary) to be—

(I) related to the treatment of the individual's condition with respect to which a diagnosis of terminal illness has been made or

(II) equivalent to (or duplicative of) hospice care;

except that clause (ii) shall not apply to physicians' services furnished by the individual's attending physician (if not an employee of the hospice program) or to services provided by (or under arrangements made by) the hospice program.

- (B) After an individual makes such an election with respect to a 90–day period or a subsequent 60–day period, the individual may revoke the election during the period, in which case—
- (i) the revocation shall act as a waiver of the right to have payment made under this part for any hospice care benefits for the remaining time in such period and (for purposes of subsection (a)(4) and subparagraph (A)) the individual shall be deemed to have been provided such benefits during such entire period, and
 - (ii) the individual may at any time after the revocation execute a new election for a subsequent period, if the individual otherwise is entitled to hospice care benefits with respect to such a period.
- (C) An individual may, once in each such period, change the hospice program with respect to which the election is made and such change shall not be considered a revocation of an election under subparagraph (B).
- (D) For purposes of this title, an individual’s election with respect to a hospice program shall no longer be considered to be in effect with respect to that hospice program after the date the individual’s revocation or change of election with respect to that election takes effect.

SSA § 1861(dd) [Hospice Care; Hospice Program]:

- (1) The term “hospice care” means the following items and services provided to a terminally ill individual by, or by others under arrangements made by, a hospice program under a written plan (for providing such care to such individual) established and periodically reviewed by the individual’s attending physician and by the medical director (and by the interdisciplinary group described in paragraph (2)(B)) of the program—
- (A) nursing care provided by or under the supervision of a registered professional nurse,
 - (B) physical or occupational therapy, or speech-language pathology services,
 - (C) medical social services under the direction of a physician,
 - (D)(i) services of a home health aide who has successfully completed a training program approved by the Secretary and
 - (ii) homemaker services,
 - (E) medical supplies (including drugs and biologicals) and the use of medical appliances, while under such a plan,
 - (F) physicians’ services,

- (G) short-term inpatient care (including both respite care and procedures necessary for pain control and acute and chronic symptom management) in an inpatient facility meeting such conditions as the Secretary determines to be appropriate to provide such care, but such respite care may be provided only on an intermittent, nonroutine, and occasional basis and may not be provided consecutively over longer than five days,
- (H) counseling (including dietary counseling) with respect to care of the terminally ill individual and adjustment to his death, and
- (I) any other item or service which is specified in the plan and for which payment may otherwise be made under this title.

The care and services described in subparagraphs (A) and (D) may be provided on a 24-hour, continuous basis only during periods of crisis (meeting criteria established by the Secretary) and only as necessary to maintain the terminally ill individual at home.

- (2) The term “hospice program” means a public agency or private organization (or a subdivision thereof) which—
 - (A)(i) is primarily engaged in providing the care and services described in paragraph (1) and makes such services available (as needed) on a 24-hour basis and which also provides bereavement counseling for the immediate family of terminally ill individuals and services described in section 1812(a)(5),
 - (ii) provides for such care and services in individuals’ homes, on an outpatient basis, and on a short-term inpatient basis, directly or under arrangements made by the agency or organization, except that—
 - (I) the agency or organization must routinely provide directly substantially all of each of the services described in subparagraphs (A), (C), and (H) of paragraph (1), except as otherwise provided in paragraph (5), and
 - (II) in the case of other services described in paragraph (1) which are not provided directly by the agency or organization, the agency or organization must maintain professional management responsibility for all such services furnished to an individual, regardless of the location or facility in which such services are furnished; and
 - (iii) provides assurances satisfactory to the Secretary that the aggregate number of days of inpatient care described in paragraph (1)(G) provided in any 12-month period to individuals who have an election in effect under section 1812(d) with respect to that agency or organization does not exceed 20 percent of the aggregate number of days during that period on which such elections for such individuals are in effect;
- (B) has an interdisciplinary group of personnel which—
 - (i) includes at least—

(I) one physician (as defined in subsection (r)(1)),

(II) one registered professional nurse, and

(III) one social worker,

employed by or, in the case of a physician described in subclause (I), under contract with the agency or organization, and also includes at least one pastoral or other counselor,

(ii) provides (or supervises the provision of) the care and services described in paragraph (1), and

(iii) establishes the policies governing the provision of such care and services;

(C) maintains central clinical records on all patients;

(D) does not discontinue the hospice care it provides with respect to a patient because of the inability of the patient to pay for such care;

(E)(i) utilizes volunteers in its provision of care and services in accordance with standards set by the Secretary, which standards shall ensure a continuing level of effort to utilize such volunteers, and

(ii) maintains records on the use of these volunteers and the cost savings and expansion of care and services achieved through the use of these volunteers;

(F) in the case of an agency or organization in any State in which State or applicable local law provides for the licensing of agencies or organizations of this nature, is licensed pursuant to such law; and

(G) meets such other requirements as the Secretary may find necessary in the interest of the health and safety of the individuals who are provided care and services by such agency or organization.

(3)(A) An individual is considered to be “terminally ill” if the individual has a medical prognosis that the individual’s life expectancy is 6 months or less.

(B) The term “attending physician” means, with respect to an individual, the physician (as defined in subsection (r)(1)), nurse practitioner (as defined in subsection (aa)(5)) or the physician assistant (as defined in such subsection), who may be employed by a hospice program, whom the individual identifies as having the most significant role in the determination and delivery of medical care to the individual at the time the individual makes an election to receive hospice care.

(4)(A) An entity which is certified as a provider of services other than a hospice program shall be considered, for purposes of certification as a hospice program, to have met any requirements under paragraph (2) which are also the same requirements for certification

as such other type of provider. The Secretary shall coordinate surveys for determining certification under this title so as to provide, to the extent feasible, for simultaneous surveys of an entity which seeks to be certified as a hospice program and as a provider of services of another type.

(B) Any entity which is certified as a hospice program and as a provider of another type shall have separate provider agreements under section 1866 and shall file separate cost reports with respect to costs incurred in providing hospice care and in providing other services and items under this title.

(5)(A) The Secretary may waive the requirements of paragraph (2)(A)(ii)(I) for an agency or organization with respect to all or part of the nursing care described in paragraph (1)(A) if such agency or organization—

(i) is located in an area which is not an urbanized area (as defined by the Bureau of the Census);

(ii) was in operation on or before January 1, 1983; and

(iii) has demonstrated a good faith effort (as determined by the Secretary) to hire a sufficient number of nurses to provide such nursing care directly.

(B) Any waiver, which is in such form and containing such information as the Secretary may require and which is requested by an agency or organization under subparagraph (A) or (C), shall be deemed to be granted unless such request is denied by the Secretary within 60 days after the date such request is received by the Secretary. The granting of a waiver under subparagraph (A) or (C) shall not preclude the granting of any subsequent waiver request should such a waiver again become necessary.

(C) The Secretary may waive the requirements of paragraph (2)(A)(i) and (2)(A)(ii) for an agency or organization with respect to the services described in paragraph (1)(B) and, with respect to dietary counseling, paragraph (1)(H), if such agency or organization—

(i) is located in an area which is not an urbanized area (as defined by the Bureau of Census), and

(ii) demonstrates to the satisfaction of the Secretary that the agency or organization has been unable, despite diligent efforts, to recruit appropriate personnel.

(D) In extraordinary, exigent, or other non-routine circumstances, such as unanticipated periods of high patient loads, staffing shortages due to illness or other events, or temporary travel of a patient outside a hospice program's service area, a hospice program may enter into arrangements with another hospice program for the provision by that other program of services described in paragraph (2)(A)(ii)(I). The provisions of paragraph (2)(A)(ii)(II) shall apply with respect to the services provided under such arrangements.

- (E) A hospice program may provide services described in paragraph (1)(A) other than directly by the program if the services are highly specialized services of a registered professional nurse and are provided non-routinely and so infrequently so that the provision of such services directly would be impracticable and prohibitively expensive.

SSA § 1812(a) [Scope of Benefits]:

The benefits provided to an individual by the insurance program under this part shall consist of entitlement to have payment made on his behalf or, in the case of payments referred to in section 1814(d)(2) to him (subject to the provisions of this part) for—

- (4) in lieu of certain other benefits, hospice care with respect to the individual during up to two periods of 90 days each and an unlimited number of subsequent periods of 60 days each with respect to which the individual makes an election under subsection (d)(1).

SSA § 1814(i) [Payment]:

- (1)(A) Subject to the limitation under paragraph (2) and the provisions of section 1813(a)(4) and except as otherwise provided in this paragraph, the amount paid to a hospice program with respect to hospice care for which payment may be made under this part shall be an amount equal to the costs which are reasonable and related to the cost of providing hospice care or which are based on such other tests of reasonableness as the Secretary may prescribe in regulations (including those authorized under section 1861(v)(1)(A)), except that no payment may be made for bereavement counseling and no reimbursement may be made for other counseling services (including nutritional and dietary counseling) as separate services.
- (B) Notwithstanding subparagraph (A), for hospice care furnished on or after April 1, 1986, the daily rate of payment per day for routine home care shall be \$63.17 and the daily rate of payment for other services included in hospice care shall be the daily rate of payment recognized under subparagraph (A) as of July 1, 1985, increased by \$10.
- (C)(i) With respect to routine home care and other services included in hospice care furnished on or after January 1, 1990, and on or before September 30, 1990, the payment rates for such care and services shall be 120 percent of such rates in effect as of September 30, 1989.
- (ii) With respect to routine home care and other services included in hospice care furnished during a subsequent fiscal year (before the first fiscal year in which the payment revisions described in paragraph (6)(D) are implemented), the payment rates for such care and services shall be the payment rates in effect under this subparagraph during the previous fiscal year increased by—

- (I) for a fiscal year ending on or before September 30, 1993, the market basket percentage increase (as defined in section 1886(b)(3)(B)(iii)) for the fiscal year;
 - (II) for fiscal year 1994, the market basket percentage increase for the fiscal year minus 2.0 percentage points;
 - (III) for fiscal year 1995, the market basket percentage increase for the fiscal year minus 1.5 percentage points;
 - (IV) for fiscal year 1996, the market basket percentage increase for the fiscal year minus 1.5 percentage points;
 - (V) for fiscal year 1997, the market basket percentage increase for the fiscal year minus 0.5 percentage point;
 - (VI) for each of fiscal years 1998 through 2002, the market basket percentage increase for the fiscal year involved minus 1.0 percentage points, plus, in the case of fiscal year 2001, 5.0 percentage points; and
 - (VII) for a subsequent fiscal year (before the first fiscal year in which the payment revisions described in paragraph (6)(D) are implemented, subject to clause (iv),, the market basket percentage increase for the fiscal year.
- (iii) With respect to routine home care and other services included in hospice care furnished during fiscal years subsequent to the first fiscal year in which payment revisions described in paragraph (6)(D) are implemented, the payment rates for such care and services shall be the payment rates in effect under this clause during the preceding fiscal year increased by, subject to clause (iv), the market basket percentage increase (as defined in section 1886(b)(3)(B)(iii)) for the fiscal year.
- (iv) Subject to clause (vi), after determining the market basket percentage increase under clause (ii)(VII) or (iii), as applicable, with respect to fiscal year 2013 and each subsequent fiscal year, the Secretary shall reduce such percentage—
- (I) for 2013 and each subsequent fiscal year, by the productivity adjustment described in section 1886(b)(3)(B)(xi)(II); and
 - (II) subject to clause (v), for each of fiscal years 2013 through 2019, by 0.3 percentage point. The application of this clause may result in the market basket percentage increase under clause (ii)(VII) or (iii), as applicable, being less than 0.0 for a fiscal year, and may result in payment rates under this subsection for a fiscal year being less than such payment rates for the preceding fiscal year.
- (v) Clause (iv)(II) shall be applied with respect to any of fiscal years 2014 through 2019 by substituting “0.0 percentage points” for “0.3 percentage point”, if for such fiscal year—

(I) the excess (if any) of—

(aa) the total percentage of the non-elderly insured population for the preceding fiscal year (based on the most recent estimates available from the Director of the Congressional Budget Office before a vote in either House on the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act that, if determined in the affirmative, would clear such Act for enrollment); over

(bb) the total percentage of the non-elderly insured population for such preceding fiscal year (as estimated by the Secretary); exceeds

(II) 5 percentage points.

(2)(A) The amount of payment made under this part for hospice care provided by (or under arrangements made by) a hospice program for an accounting year may not exceed the “cap amount” for the year (computed under subparagraph (B)) multiplied by the number of medicare beneficiaries in the hospice program in that year (determined under subparagraph (C)).

(B)(i) Except as provided in clause (ii), for purposes of subparagraph (A), the “cap amount” for a year is \$6,500, increased or decreased, for accounting years that end after October 1, 1984, by the same percentage as the percentage increase or decrease, respectively, in the medical care expenditure category of the Consumer Price Index for All Urban Consumers (United States city average), published by the Bureau of Labor Statistics, from March 1984 to the fifth month of the accounting year.

(ii) For purposes of subparagraph (A) for accounting years that end after September 30, 2016, and before October 1, 2025, the “cap amount” is the cap amount under this subparagraph for the preceding accounting year updated by the percentage update to payment rates for hospice care under paragraph (1)(C) for services furnished during the fiscal year beginning on the October 1 preceding the beginning of the accounting year (including the application of any productivity or other adjustment under clause (iv) of that paragraph).

(iii) For accounting years that end after September 30, 2025, the cap amount shall be computed under clause (i) as if clause (ii) had never applied.

(C) For purposes of subparagraph (A), the “number of medicare beneficiaries” in a hospice program in an accounting year is equal to the number of individuals who have made an election under subsection (d) with respect to the hospice program and have been provided hospice care by (or under arrangements made by) the hospice program under this part in the accounting year, such number reduced to reflect the proportion of hospice care that each such individual was provided in a previous or subsequent accounting year or under a plan of care established by another hospice program.

(D) A hospice program shall submit claims for payment for hospice care furnished in an individual’s home under this title only on the basis of the geographic location at which

the service is furnished, as determined by the Secretary.

- (3) Hospice programs providing hospice care for which payment is made under this subsection shall submit to the Secretary such data with respect to the costs for providing such care for each fiscal year, beginning with fiscal year 1999, as the Secretary determines necessary.
- (4) The amount paid to a hospice program with respect to the services under section 1812(a)(5) for which payment may be made under this part shall be equal to an amount established for an office or other outpatient visit for evaluation and management associated with presenting problems of moderate severity and requiring medical decision making of low complexity under the fee schedule established under section 1848(b), other than the portion of such amount attributable to the practice expense component.
- (5) Quality Reporting.—
 - (A) Reduction in Update for Failure to Report.—
 - (i) In General.—For purposes of fiscal year 2014 and each subsequent fiscal year, in the case of a hospice program that does not submit data to the Secretary in accordance with subparagraph (C) with respect to such a fiscal year, after determining the market basket percentage increase under paragraph (1)(C)(ii)(VII) or paragraph (1)(C)(iii), as applicable, and after application of paragraph (1)(C)(iv), with respect to the fiscal year, the Secretary shall reduce such market basket percentage increase by 2 percentage points.
 - (ii) Special Rule.—The application of this subparagraph may result in the market basket percentage increase under paragraph (1)(C)(ii)(VII) or paragraph (1)(C)(iii), as applicable, being less than 0.0 for a fiscal year, and may result in payment rates under this subsection for a fiscal year being less than such payment rates for the preceding fiscal year.
 - (B) Noncumulative Application.—Any reduction under subparagraph (A) shall apply only with respect to the fiscal year involved and the Secretary shall not take into account such reduction in computing the payment amount under this subsection for a subsequent fiscal year.
 - (C) Submission of Quality Data.—For fiscal year 2014 and each subsequent fiscal year, each hospice program shall submit to the Secretary data on quality measures specified under subparagraph (D). Such data shall be submitted in a form and manner, and at a time, specified by the Secretary for purposes of this subparagraph.
 - (D) Quality Measures.—
 - (i) In General.—Subject to clause (ii), any measure specified by the Secretary under this subparagraph must have been endorsed by the entity with a contract under section 1890(a).

- (ii) Exception.—In the case of a specified area or medical topic determined appropriate by the Secretary for which a feasible and practical measure has not been endorsed by the entity with a contract under section 1890(a), the Secretary may specify a measure that is not so endorsed as long as due consideration is given to measures that have been endorsed or adopted by a consensus organization identified by the Secretary.
 - (iii) Time Frame.—Not later than October 1, 2012, the Secretary shall publish the measures selected under this subparagraph that will be applicable with respect to fiscal year 2014.
- (E) Public Availability of Data Submitted.—The Secretary shall establish procedures for making data submitted under subparagraph (C) available to the public. Such procedures shall ensure that a hospice program has the opportunity to review the data that is to be made public with respect to the hospice program prior to such data being made public. The Secretary shall report quality measures that relate to hospice care provided by hospice programs on the Internet website of the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services.
- (6)(A) The Secretary shall collect additional data and information as the Secretary determines appropriate to revise payments for hospice care under this subsection pursuant to subparagraph (D) and for other purposes as determined appropriate by the Secretary. The Secretary shall begin to collect such data by not later than January 1, 2011.
- (B) The additional data and information to be collected under subparagraph (A) may include data and information on—
- (i) charges and payments;
 - (ii) the number of days of hospice care which are attributable to individuals who are entitled to, or enrolled for, benefits under part A; and
 - (iii) with respect to each type of service included in hospice care—
 - (I) the number of days of hospice care attributable to the type of service;
 - (II) the cost of the type of service; and
 - (III) the amount of payment for the type of service;
 - (iv) charitable contributions and other revenue of the hospice program;
 - (v) the number of hospice visits;
 - (vi) the type of practitioner providing the visit; and
 - (vii) the length of the visit and other basic information with respect to the visit.

(C) The Secretary may collect the additional data and information under subparagraph (A) on cost reports, claims, or other mechanisms as the Secretary determines to be appropriate.

(D)(i) Notwithstanding the preceding paragraphs of this subsection, not earlier than October 1, 2013, the Secretary shall, by regulation, implement revisions to the methodology for determining the payment rates for routine home care and other services included in hospice care under this part, as the Secretary determines to be appropriate. Such revisions may be based on an analysis of data and information collected under subparagraph (A). Such revisions may include adjustments to per diem payments that reflect changes in resource intensity in providing such care and services during the course of the entire episode of hospice care.

(ii) Revisions in payment implemented pursuant to clause (i) shall result in the same estimated amount of aggregate expenditures under this title for hospice care furnished in the fiscal year in which such revisions in payment are implemented as would have been made under this title for such care in such fiscal year if such revisions had not been implemented.

(E) The Secretary shall consult with hospice programs and the Medicare Payment Advisory Commission regarding the additional data and information to be collected under subparagraph (A) and the payment revisions under subparagraph (D).

(7) In the case of hospice care provided by a hospice program under arrangements under section 1861(dd)(5)(D) made by another hospice program, the hospice program that made the arrangements shall bill and be paid for the hospice care.

Section § 1862(a) [Exclusions from Coverage]:

Notwithstanding any other provision of this title, no payment may be made under part A or part B for any expenses incurred for items or services—

- (1)(C) in the case of hospice care, which are not reasonable and necessary for the palliation or management of terminal illness,
- (6) which constitute personal comfort items (except, in the case of hospice care, as is otherwise permitted under paragraph (1)(C));
- (9) where such expenses are for custodial care (except, in the case of hospice care, as is otherwise permitted under paragraph (1)(C)).

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