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Medicare

Medicare Proposes Pay Raise for Home Health in 2019

Medicare's payments to home health agencies could increase by 2.1 percent in calendar year 2019, or by a total of \$400 million, under a new proposal.

The proposed rule by the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services would also change the model for how these visits would be paid for, focusing on clinical characteristics instead of volume of therapy. This is part of the agency's move toward value-based purchasing.

"The redesign of the home health payment system encourages value over volume and removes incentives to provide unnecessary care," CMS Administrator Seema Verma said in a statement July 2.

The rule would also include the cost of remote patient monitoring for the first time, which would allow "pa-

tients to share more live-time data with their providers," according to a CMS statement.

Transitional payment for home infusion therapy services would also be included in this rule to bridge the gap between Jan. 1, 2019, and the implementation of a benefit created by the 21st Century Cures Act, which would go into effect Jan. 1, 2021.

The CMS is also proposing the removal of a requirement for physicians to estimate how much longer skilled services are required, which the agency estimates would save physicians \$14 million annually.

Comments are due Aug. 31.

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