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## Medicare/Medicaid

### **New Medicare Database Could Ease Post-Acute Care Transitions**

A new Medicare database will boost the exchange of electronic health information among post-acute care providers such as long-term care hospitals, skilled nursing facilities, and home health agencies.

The Data Element Library will contain information such as patient demographics, medical problems, and health evaluations that providers are required to report to the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services. The database, which won't contain any personally identifiable information, will use health IT standards to promote interoperability among health IT vendors, allowing them to "speak the same language" because they're using nationally agreed-upon standards, the CMS said. This is the first time the data sets will be publicly available.

The database could "promote smooth transitions of care" because the database could ultimately make it easier for post-acute care providers to transfer electronic health records, Thomas Threlkeld, deputy director of policy and communications at the National Association for Home Care & Hospice, told Bloomberg Law June 21.

"We're excited to add this important building block to the foundation for interoperability that CMS is helping to establish," CMS Administrator Seema Verma said in a statement. "The DEL supports the use and sharing of data, and aligns with MyHealthEData, a government wide effort strengthening the interoperability of health information."

Providers aren't required to use the database, although they can use it to develop health IT solutions for patients, according to the CMS.

It's possible for providers to use this data to improve patient care, Threlkeld said.

The CMS proposed changes to the Medicare and Medicaid Electronic Health Record Incentive Programs in April to improve information sharing between providers and patients and increase accessibility for patients to obtain their medical records electronically.

The CMS said it intends to put skilled nursing facility quality reporting program data on the agency's Nursing Home Compare page by Oct. 1.

The new CMS database could include assessment content for other facilities in the future, according to CMS officials.

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