

Dear Colleague:

Medicare has changed the physician documentation requirements for certification of home health care for dates of service effective January 1, 2015. While clinicians still need to certify benefit eligibility and a face to face encounter is still required, the need for extra documentation (e.g., the “narrative”) has been scaled back or eliminated. These remaining requirements may be billed in the following manner: a face-to-face encounter with a physician or allowed non-physician practitioner is billed with an evaluation and management (E&M) code and the certification is billed with G0180 (G0179 for recertification). The home health agency will provide medical records from the office or hospital setting describing the patient’s condition and supporting his/her eligibility for home care prior to your completion of the certification document. The agency may need progress notes from you or hospital records of the face-to-face visit if it was done in the hospital setting in order to substantiate the reason home health care is needed.

In review, to qualify for the Medicare Home Health Benefit beneficiaries must have Medicare Part A and/or Part B and meet all of the following requirements:

- Be confined to the home;
- Need skilled services;
- Be under the care of a physician;
- Receive services under a plan of care established and periodically reviewed by a physician; and
- Have a face-to-face encounter with a physician or allowed non-physician practitioner (NPP) (reviewed and counter-signed by the physician).

Your Home Health/Hospice Medicare contractor’s website may be accessed to obtain information regarding eligibility and documentation requirements. Additional references are as follows:

- [CMS MLN Article \(MM9119 Revised\) Manual Updates to Clarify Requirements for Physician Certification and Recertification of Patient Eligibility for Home Health Services](#)
- [Certifying Patients for the Medicare Home Health Benefit](#)
- [Medicare Home Health Agency \(HHA\) Center](#)

Sincerely,

Contractor Medical Directors  
Home Health/Hospice Medicare Contractors