

Palmetto GBA GIP Video Script

Hello, I am Charles Canaan, Senior Provider Education Consultant at Palmetto GBA. As a Medicare contractor for CMS, Palmetto GBA is tasked with preventing claims payment errors. Our Provider Outreach and Education department helps providers like you understand the fundamentals, significant changes and new initiatives of the Medicare program. This includes national and local policies, procedures, and issues identified through data analysis. Our goal is to create a strong Health Information Supply Chain. This helps reduce incorrect billing and payments, and at the same time ensures that your patients are receiving the correct level of care they need.

Today, I want to talk to you about hospice general inpatient care or G – I – P. When it comes to length of stay, Medicare policy does not specify the number of days GIP is allowed, although it is intended to be short-term. A national study of nearly three thousand GIP providers indicated that one third of all GIP stays lasted longer than five days. More than 11 percent of all GIP stays were 10 days or more, and 2 percent lasted more than three weeks.

Palmetto GBA's review of J11 data revealed that two-thirds of the beneficiary lengths of stay were only one day, but more than 15 percent of the stays were seven days or more. The J11 average length of stay for GIP was 15.4 days. Our break down of stays by facility type showed that inpatient hospice had an average length of stay of 15.2 days, inpatient hospital stays lasted an average of 9.7 days and stays in skilled nursing facilities averaged 23.2 days.

To try to determine potential causes for extended lengths of stay, Palmetto GBA compiled Comparative Billing Reports based on providers billing for the GIP level of care and sent a letter to all providers at the 80th percentile. We then conducted group and individual teleconferences and identified three primary areas for you to focus on to help avoid long lengths of stay. These areas are evaluation, discharge planning and documentation.

First, you need to thoroughly evaluate the need for the GIP level of care. Remember GIP is for pain control or symptom management which cannot be delivered in other settings, such as the patient's home. Upon transfer to GIP level of care, be sure that the medical record includes the precipitating event such as the onset of uncontrollable symptoms or pain. Your documentation should also include any in-home interventions that were unsuccessful at controlling the patient's symptoms or pain.

Once you determine GIP level of care is required, you need to address discharge planning. Remember that discharge planning begins on admission and continues throughout the GIP stay. We all understand GIP is not intended to be custodial or residential, and that once the patient's symptoms are stabilized or pain is managed, he or she must return to a routine level of care. The patient may remain in a facility, but Medicare will not pay for GIP if the medical records do not indicate a clear need for GIP level of care.

These first two steps identify the need for proper and complete documentation which is the third area of focus. Here are five recommendations to help ensure that your documentation supports the GIP level of care:

- Number one: Describe the services provided
- Number two: Document care that patient's caregivers cannot manage at home. Some examples are frequent changes in the dose or schedule of medications or the need for IV medications.
- Number three: Identify the precipitating event that led to GIP status
- Number four: Describe failed attempts to control symptoms that occurred prior to admission
- And number five: Identify specific symptoms that are being actively addressed

We believe that if you implement these recommendations into your internal processes, you will help create and maintain a strong Health Information Supply Chain. This will enable you to deliver the best care possible and avoid costly errors that could result in the loss of Medicare coverage and payment.

I'm Charles Canaan with Palmetto GBA. Thanks for watching.