January 20, 2014

Q: What is the latest rule on bedholds for nursing facilities?

A: The Nursing Home Care Act requires nursing facilities to hold a bed for 10 days when a person is temporarily absent due to a hospitalization and intends to return to the facility. This is a state licensure requirement and is applicable to all residents regardless of payor source. It is not applicable to therapeutic home visit.

Effective 7/1/2012, the SMART Act ended all Medicaid payment to Nursing Facilities (ICF and SNF) to hold a bed for a resident who is temporarily absent due to hospitalization or therapeutic home visit and who intend to return to the facility.


Although Medicaid payment ended effective 7/1/2012, reporting the temporary absence (to HFS) continues to be required as in the past. Facilities must use the MEDI system to report the bed reserve period in the same manner that admissions, discharges and changes in Level of Care are reported. Not reporting a bed reserve will cause payment to continue during the absence until reported. If not reported, and found during a post-payment audit, it would be addressed as part of an audit finding. When a Medicaid-eligible person enters a hospital and the hospital bills for inpatient services, automatic edits will cause the nursing facility claim for the entire month to be rejected.

Even if the bed is filled during the absence the resident should not be discharged and should be given the next available Medicaid certified bed.