April 14, 2014

Q: With regard to hospice care, how is care coordinated between the resident’s attending physician and the hospice medical director? Who has ultimate control? What about the physical exam and 30 day visit requirements?

A: The State LTC Code at 300.1010g) states that a new resident to a SNF/NF facility must have a physical exam within 5 days prior to admission or within 72 hours after admission. Section 280.2070 of the Hospice Code states that “The medical director (of the hospice) shall have overall responsibility for the medical direction of the patient care component of the hospice program shall consult and cooperate with the patient’s attending physician.” Section 280.2080c) of the Hospice Code states that “Any contract entered into between a hospice and a health care facility...shall specify that the hospice care team retains the responsibility for planning and coordinating hospice services and care on behalf of a hospice patient and his/her family.” Section 280.2070c)8) of the Hospice Code also states that the hospice medical director is to maintain liaison with the attending physician, and that the attending physician is encouraged to provide primary care to his/her patient even though the patient also receives hospice care. Based on the above, the requirement for 30 day visits would remain in effect.