

January 10, 2008

MEDICAID BULLETIN

HH 08-01

TO: Home Health Agencies

SUBJECT: Social Work Services to Enhance the Effectiveness of Home Health

- I. Service Definition**
- II. Reimbursement**
- III. Limitations**

The South Carolina Department of Health and Human Services (SCDHHS) will now include **Social Work Services to Enhance the Effectiveness of Home Health Services** as part of the Home Health program. The coverage for this service was approved by the Center for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) through an amendment made to the Title XIX State plan for Medicaid Services. The effective date for the service will be retroactive to October 1, 2006.

I. Service Definition:

Social Work Services to Enhance the Effectiveness of Home Health may be provided to Medicaid home health recipients who are under the direct care of a Medicare certified home health agency contracted with the State Medicaid agency.

Medical social service functions must be provided by a social worker with a graduate degree from an accredited school of social work. All practitioners must be licensed in accordance with federal and state requirements; be supervised by the clinical director of the home health agency; meet all requirements found in CFR440.60, and be employed by a Medicare certified home health agency that is contracted with SCDHHS to provide services.

Services provided must be identified during an assessment process of the social, emotional, and environmental issues and focused on the medical condition or the rate of recovery of the patient. The assessment must also include the relationship of the patient's medical and nursing requirements to their patient's home situation, financial resources, and availability of community resources.

The medical social services staff identifies and obtains referrals to community resources on behalf of the patient; advocates through consultation, liaison, and interdisciplinary collaboration for the services for the patient, whose risk status may interfere with the achievement of the home health goals; and interface with the resolution of identified patient problems that cannot be resolved.

A continuous evaluation process is implemented to assess the achievement of specified goals and to address the impact of the patient's illness, need of care, response to treatment, and adjustment to care.

Medical social services may be furnished to the patient's family member or caregiver on a short-term basis when the home health agency can demonstrate that a brief intervention (two or three visits) by a medical social worker is necessary to remove a clear and direct impediment to the effective treatment of the patient's medical condition or to his or her rate of recovery. To be considered "clear and direct," the behavior or actions of the family member must plainly obstruct, contravene, or prevent the patient's medical treatment or rate of recovery. Medical social services that address general problems that do not clearly and directly impede treatment or recovery as well as long-term social services furnished to family members, such as ongoing alcohol counseling, are not covered.

II. Reimbursement:

The reimbursement methodology for this service is the same as for the home health services. That is, an interim payment rate is established for claims processing purposes with cost settlement at year-end based on the lesser of cost, charges or Medicare cost limits. The initial interim rates will be mailed to home health agencies by the Division of Ancillary Reimbursements no later than January 31, 2008.

Claims for Social Work Services to Enhance the Effectiveness of Home Health, procedure code S9127, should be billed the same as current home health services. This service has received retroactive approval beginning October 1, 2006. All claims over one year from date of service will reject with a 510 edit code. Please forward the edit correction forms for these claims to your Program Manager for processing. Billing may be submitted upon receipt of this bulletin or upon receipt of the interim rate.

III. Limitations:

As with all home health services, to be considered for reimbursement, claims for Social Work Services to Enhance the Effectiveness of Home Health must be a face-to-face encounter and are included in the visit limitation per fiscal year.

Thank you for your continued participation in the South Carolina Medicaid program. Please contact your Program Manager at (803) 898-2590 should you have any questions.

/s/

Emma Forkner
Director

EF/mwbk

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